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THE RECTOR'S SON.

VOL. II.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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THE

RECTOR's SON,

IN THREE VOLUMES,

By ANNE PLUMPTRE,

AUTHOR OF ANTOINETTE.

VOL. II.

L'imagination ne sauroit inventer tant de diverses contrariétés qu'il y en a naturellement dans le cœur de chaque personne.

ROCHEFOUCAULD.

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THE RECTOR's SON.

CHAPTER I.

Cosi di naviganti audace stuolo
Che mova a ricercar estranio lido:
E in mar dubbioso, e sotto ignoto polo
Provi l'onde fallaci, e'l vento infido;
S'al fin discopre il desiato suolo
Il saluta da lunge in lieta grido:
E l'uno a l'altro mostra, e in tanto oblia
La noia e'l mal de la passata via.

TASSO.

AT length Charles once more hailed the ſhores of his native country. When, through the medium of the ſhip's glaſſes, he caught the firſt view of the white cliffs, he threw his arms in an extaſy round Rainsford's neck: "Behold them," he cried, "behold the ſhores of England, the abode of all that is admirable on earth, the abode of Amelia! —Oh, happy Rainsford, who art about to ſee

that lovelieſt of women!—Oh, much more happy Meadows, who art about to poſſeſs her!"—and in that moment his heart was incapable of admitting ſuch an idea, as the poſſibility that any obſtacles could ariſe between him and happineſs.

He could not wait for going round to the river, but obtained permiſſion to be put on ſhore at Portſmouth, whence, though late in the evening, he ſet off without delay for London, which he reached early the next morning. He immediately diſpatched a letter to Elſham, informing Amelia of his arrival, and that he hoped to be with her in a very ſhort time, unleſs ſhe ſhould direct him otherwiſe; intreating however, that if ſhe would not permit his coming thither, ſome other place of meeting might be appointed, as his impatience to ſee her knew no bounds. The meſſenger by whom this was ſent was directed to bring the anſwer to an inn at Batterley, about a mile from Elſham, where he and Rainsford would be in waiting for its reception.

Charles followed his letter ſo cloſely, that he and his friend arrived at Batterley almoſt

as

as ſoon as his letter arrived at Elſham. Every moment that he waited for the anſwer ſeemed to him an age; he walked up and down the room, he looked out of the window, then drew in his head again, to exult to Rainsford on his approaching happineſs, and to curſe the tardy foot of time which would not keep pace with his impatience.

At length the meſſenger entered the room with a packet in his hand, which Charles ſnatched haſtily, and broke open with enthuſiaſtic eagerneſs; but what was his aſtoniſhment, what the tranſport of agonizing diſappointment and mortification that overpowered him, when he beheld only his own letter returned unopened, in a blank cover! A volume could not have ſpoken more forcibly; all that Captain Anneſley had ſaid in India ruſhed at once on his mind, he felt it confirmed by the contempt Amelia had thus ſhewn; his countenance changed, a wild phrenzy ſeized him inſtantly, and drawing a piſtol from his pocket he aimed it directly at his head. The balance of a ſtraw only ſtood between him and deſtruction; but Rainsford, who had obſerved

his altered appearance, and beheld the piſtol in his hand, caught his arm at the critical moment, and turned it aſide, though at the imminent hazard of his own life; for in the ſcuffle that enſued, he ſeeking to gain, Charles to keep poſſeſſion of the fatal weapon, it went off, and the ball paſſed Rainsford's head ſo cloſe as to ſinge the hair.

The report of the piſtol raiſed a general alarm in the inn, and in an inſtant the room was filled with people, all eager to know the occaſion of it. On entering, they found the frantic Charles ſtruggling to get looſe from his friend, ſwearing, that though he was foiled in this attempt, he was determined not to live, and exhibiting an object of horror in its wildeſt exceſs; he was pale as death, his eyes glaring, his mouth foaming, almoſt breathleſs, yet ſtill endeavouring to call down imprecations on himſelf, on Amelia, on the whole world.

The arrival of help was very opportune to Rainsford, who was quite unable by himſelf to withſtand the acceſſion of ſtrength which Charles had gained by his phrenzy; but, aided by his ſervant and the maſter of the inn, he

he ſoon diſabled him from making farther reſiſtance; on which Charles threw himſelf on the floor, where he lay for ſome time without motion, and almoſt ſenſeleſs.

It was then that Rainsford took up the packet which had been the fatal cauſe of this burſt of paſſion, and learned the full extent of his friend's wretchedneſs—learned that the object, on the poſſeſſion of which his ſoul had been ſo long and ſo ardently ſet, was probably loſt to him for ever; for what elſe could be inferred from the ſilent indignation which Amelia had ſhewn?

Yet, notwithſtanding that appearances were ſo unfavourable, he was too ſteady, and too ſincere a friend, to ſuffer an affair of this importance to paſs off, without exerting every poſſible effort to clear it up to the ſatisfaction of the parties concerned, and reſtore them to mutual confidence and affection. He therefore determined to go himſelf to Amelia, who could have no juſt reaſon for refuſing to ſee *him*, and endeavour to rectify any miſtakes which might have wrought this change, and convince her, that if her lover had not been

wholly faultleſs, his offences had, at leaſt, not been of a nature abſolutely unpardonable.

But immediate relief to the agony of mind in which he ſaw his friend, was the firſt object which called for his attention. After he had ſuffered him therefore to lie ſtill for a while, he went to him and endeavoured to raiſe him up, which, with the aſſiſtance of the ſervant, he ſoon accompliſhed, and placed him in a chair, where he ſat for ſome little time ſilent and compoſed. But this was ſoon followed by another raving fit more violent than the former; he uttered a torrent of invective againſt all mankind, ſwearing that he did not believe there exiſted throughout the whole habitable globe ſuch a being as an honeſt man, or a faithful woman.—No, the men were all knaves, hypocrites, deceivers;—the women baſiliſks, crocodiles, beautiful only to deſtroy, faſcinating only to curſe whoever might behold them; and he was reſolved thenceforward to renounce all intercourſe with his fellow creatures. He would go back to India directly, and, taking his child with him, haſten to the cave where he found his Indamora,

mora, the only woman he ever ſaw capable of real artleſs affection; and keeping the dear infant in ignorance of the ways of a world which he deteſted, would live only by her ſmiles, and die in peace in her arms. Then, in a moment after this reſolution was made it was changed; and he ſwore he would have Amelia in ſpite of herſelf, for ſhe was his wife, and all the powers of earth, aye and of hell combined, ſhould not keep her from him; —if ſhe remained deaf to his entreaties, force ſhould put him into poſſeſſion of his rights.

It was now that Rainsford firſt was fully aſſured that his friend was actually married; he had indeed more than once ſuſpected it, from obſcure phraſes which had at times eſcaped him, when Amelia was the ſubject of their converſation; particularly once during the voyage, when talking over what had paſſed with Captain Anneſley, Charles aſſerted in ſuch poſitive terms the impoſſibility of her ever having harboured an idea of their ſeparation, that he ſeemed clearly to conſider himſelf as having ſome ſtronger tie upon her than a mere promiſe of marriage. But the ſecret

which honour had kept concealed, phrenzy at length publiſhed;—yet Rainsford ſaw, that though in conſequence of their vows having been exchanged, Charles's claim was powerful, it was one which muſt be managed with caution and delicacy.

He reſolved therefore, in the firſt place, to remove him from the neighbourhood of Amelia, leſt, in the diſtracted ſtate of his mind, he might be led to commit ſome act of violence which would materially injure his cauſe. This he accompliſhed, partly by threats of abandoning him entirely to his fate, if he ſhould continue to act in a manner ſo unworthy of a man, partly by ſoothings and entreaties, and urging the expediency, nay even neceſſity, of his returning immediately to London, that they might have leiſure calmly to conſider, what ſteps could with propriety be taken in ſo ſingular a ſituation.

By the time, however, that they arrived in London, all conſiderations were abſorbed in attending to the ſtate of Charles's health, who through the agitations he had undergone, was thrown into a violent fever, attended with a ſtrong

ſtrong delirium, which rendered his life for a long time extremely doubtful. Rainsford never quitted him for a moment during three weeks that the delirium continued, and was the only perſon who had ſufficient influence over him, to keep it within any kind of bounds. In all that time, no other object but Amelia ſeemed preſent to his mind; he talked inceſſantly of her, and to her; one while, in ſtrains of the tendereſt affection, and heart-rending entreaties to compaſſionate his ſufferings; then, in terms of the harſheſt invective and upbraiding: while Rainsford, by falling in with all his humours, contributed more towards finally ſoothing him into compoſure, and giving a favourable turn to his diſtemper, than any efforts of medical ſkill.

At the commencement of Charles's illneſs, Rainsford wrote to Mr. Meadows, to inform him of his ſon's return to England, and the unfortunate circumſtances which enſued. On the recept of ſo melancholy a letter, the poor father, ſcarcely leſs diſtracted than his child, ſet off immediately for London, and, though

at a very advanced age, reſted neither day nor night till he arrived there.

What a meeting was this, with a beloved ſon, whom once more to behold, was his only remaining wiſh on earth! He beheld him again, it was true; but inſtead of ruſhing with tranſport to meet his paternal embrace, he was extended on the bed of ſickneſs, pale, dejected, and not even ſenſible that it was his father who ſtood before him. Day after day he ſaw him continue in this afflicting ſtate, till he almoſt began to deſpair of any change, when even at that moment the firſt dawn of returning reaſon appeared. The unhappy ſufferer had been in a compoſed ſleep for ſome hours, when, on awaking, he ſaw his father by his bed-ſide, and turning to Rainsford, aſked who that was. On being informed, he held out his hand with an affecting ſmile, that ſhewed ſomething like knowledge of the object, and pleaſure in ſeeing it; while the poor father, with tears ſtreaming down his venerable cheeks, preſſed the wan hand to his boſom, in the joyful hope that what he now witneſſed was but a prelude to ſtill greater tranſports.

Nor

Nor did he deceive himſelf; for the next morning, on entering the ſick-room, Charles, as if a miſt had ſuddenly been diſperſed from before his eyes, ſprung out of bed and threw himſelf into his father's arms, ſuppoſing he had then ſeen him for the firſt time. From that hour his recovery was rapid, and the return of his former ſenſibility and amiable diſpoſition not leſs ſo; when, by the exceſs of affectionate attention which he ſhewed his father, he made him amends for all he had ſuffered on his account, and evinced, in the moſt forcible manner, that his former attachments were in no way altered by his reſidence in foreign countries.

When Rainsford thought his reaſon ſufficiently re-eſtabliſhed to encounter either the tranſports of a reconciliation with Amelia, if that could be effected, or the horrors of being fully confirmed in her total alienation, he firſt ventured to ſuggeſt his idea of going himſelf to Elſham, and endeavouring to obtain an interview, when he might explain all matters to her ſatisfaction. Nothing could exceed the tranſports of gratitude into which Charles burſt

forth on hearing of this intention, excepting his impatience for its being carried into execution; and accordingly Rainsford, not to trifle with his feelings, set out on the embassy the next morning.

CHAPTER

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER II.

Tu vas user de ta franchise
De ton adresse, et de ton accortise.

IN conſequence of the above unfortunate circumſtances, ſo long a time had elapſed after Amelia's returning Charles's letter, in which no tidings of him reached her, that ſhe at length concluded it to be his intention to take no farther ſteps in the affair. At this ſhe often expreſſed herſelf to Mrs. Anneſley, as being extremely ſurpriſed; "yet," ſhe would add, "it is a moſt unexpected relief to me; for I had great apprehenſions when I received his letter, that after having totally neglected me for ſo long a time, he might now become equally importunate for our re-union. But this convinces me, Juliana, how perfectly

I was

I was in the right not to pay any attention to his application, but by returning his letter unopened, to impreſs him with an irreſiſtible aſſurance that I was reſolved to put an end to our connection. Had he retained the ſame attachment to me which he always profeſſed, and I believe really felt before his departure, he could not have acquieſced ſo quietly in the contempt I ſhewed him, but muſt have made ſome efforts to vindicate himſelf. But it is all very well, and I have now no cauſe of regret on his account; for if he is ſo eaſily contented without *me*, I know not why I ſhould make myſelf at all unhappy about *him*."

From ſuch ſentiments, what could Mrs. Anneſley collect, but that while Amelia was endeavouring to deceive herſelf into the idea that ſhe felt ſatisfaction at her huſband's not urging on his claim, ſhe was in fact only mortified at his apparently contented acquieſcence in a ſeparation, dictated by her ideas of honour rather than by her inclinations?

Mr. and Mrs. Anneſley, indeed, knew how much ſhe was miſtaken with regard to Charles, as they had heard from more than one quarter

of

of the ſcene which had paſſed at Batterley, as well as of his illneſs on returning to London. But they thought the moſt deſirable thing for Amelia was to remain in an error, which might contribute to eradicate the lurking remains of a paſſion ſo inimical to her happineſs, and had therefore taken every poſſible precaution to prevent its coming to her knowledge; rightly judging, that ſuch a circumſtance could ſcarcely fail to revive her yet but half-ſubdued intereſt for a man whom ſhe had long ſo ardently loved, and who was ſuffering ſo much on her account. They were indeed, almoſt ſtaggered themſelves with the reports brought them, ſince the violent manner in which Charles had been affected by Amelia's neglect, was extremely inconſiſtent with his former apparent indifference.

But as Rainsford's viſit was an event which they could not foreſee, they conſequently could not guard againſt it. The very morning that he went to Elſham, Charles's conduct had again been the ſubject of the breakfaſt converſation, when Amelia had repeated, not much leſs than the twentieth time, her expreſſions of mortified

mortified ſatisfaction that ſhe had never heard any thing more of him, and once more applauded her own reſolution in the part ſhe had acted; all which the Anneſleys noticed to each other with no ſmall concern, when ſhe had quitted them after breakfaſt, and, according to her uſual cuſtom, retired to her own dreſſing-room for the morning.

Amelia had not been ſeated there many minutes, and was ſtill meditating on the ſubject on which ſhe had ſo recently been converſing, when a ſervant entered, and preſented her with a card on which was the name of "Captain Rainsford," ſaying, that it was ſent up by a gentleman then at the door, who requeſted permiſſion to wait upon her for half an hour on buſineſs of importance. She knew the name to be that of Charles's intimate friend, and for a moment heſitated whether ſhe ought not to excuſe herſelf from ſeeing him; but no reaſonable excuſe occurring, and poſſibly too an impulſe of gratification impreſſing her mind, almoſt inſenſibly to herſelf, at the idea of ſeeing a perſon ſo nearly connected with her huſband, ſhe bade the ſervant ſhew him up. Yet the

the recollection that he was perhaps come as an interceſſor for Charles, agitated her ſo much, that ſhe was ſeized with an univerſal trembling; and when ſhe endeavoured to riſe from her ſeat at his entrance, ſhe ſunk down again, while a faint colour ſpread inſtantly over her whole countenance.

Nor was Rainsford himſelf much leſs embarraſſed, and a ſilence of two or three minutes enſued, while he was conſidering in what way to open his embaſſy, and contemplating a perfection of beauty of which he had before ſcarcely an idea, no not even when he beheld his Anna. High indeed as his expectations had been raiſed, by the extravagant terms in which his friend had often mentioned her, ſhe fell by no means below them; and he was forced to confeſs, that in the deſcriptions he had repeatedly heard, no allowance was to be made for a lover's raptures.

When the firſt emotions of embarraſſment had ſomewhat ſubſided, Rainsford began:— "This intruſion from a ſtranger, Madam, muſt, no doubt, appear rather extraordinary, and requires an apology; it would, indeed, be inexcuſable

cuſable on an occaſion of leſs importance than the preſent, but I am urged by friendſhip to requeſt this conference; and ſurely Mrs. Meadows will not refuſe to liſten to the voice of a power, whoſe influence ſhe has herſelf ſo ſtrongly felt."

Amelia ſtarted at being addreſſed by a name which ſhe had never yet aſſumed; — ſhe was diſpoſed to be angry, but Rainsford's eaſy and poliſhed manners were not to be withſtood, and ſhe felt them in a moment repel thoſe emotions, when caſting a melancholy glance at him, ſhe ſaid, "Pray proceed, Sir."

"I have ſaid, Madam, that Friendſhip brings me hither. Oh, Mrs. Meadows, fain, very fain, would I reſtore to your eſteem a friend of mine who once enjoyed it in a high degree, but who, through your late unkindneſs, has been brought to the very brink of the grave. — Charles Meadows, Madam," —

"And what of Mr. Meadows, Sir," interrupted Amelia; "if you are come to plead for him, Captain Rainsford, I muſt tell you before-hand, that your eloquence will be of no avail. The conduct which I have obſerved towards

towards him, has not been dictated by caprice or inconſtancy; I have the beſt reaſons for what I have done, and, unleſs the paſt could be recalled, he never can regain that place in my eſteem which he once held."

"Indeed, Mrs. Meadows, I am afraid you have been deceived; ſome villain, anxious to deſtroy happineſs which he could never hope to experience, has been buſy with my friend's fame."

"No, Mr. Rainsford, it is not on the idle tales of artful villany that I have diſcarded from my heart, a man, to whom it was once ſo entirely devoted; heaven knows that I loved him too well to be eaſily wrought on to doubt his faith and integrity. Would to God that you could prove all I have heard of his miſconduct to be falſe; I ſhould moſt ſincerely rejoice to find that he is not the vicious character I ſuppoſe him—but that I know to be impoſſible!—Oh, I have not condemned him till I had proofs too glaring for even a wife to diſbelieve!"

"I own, Madam, that Meadows has been guilty; yes, highly guilty with regard to you,

and

and I have often reproved him on that account; yet, from my ſoul, I believe he has a truly excellent heart, or I had never appeared as his interceſſor:—Sure I am too, that amidſt all his wanderings, he has ever been, and is at this moment, moſt ſincerely, moſt devotedly yours, and of this his preſent ſituation is a ſufficient proof. Oh, Mrs. Meadows, had you ſeen him as I did, frantic with deſpair at the unkind and indignant manner in which you returned a letter, full of the moſt ardent expreſſions of attachment, and joy at the near proſpect of your re-union; had you ſeen him then madly attempt to get rid of an exiſtence thus rendered hateful; had you heard him afterwards, amidſt the delirious ravings of a fever, ſtill calling on your name, ſtill thinking of you, and you only, and ſwearing that he would not ſurvive your loſs, you muſt have pitied him—indeed you muſt.—Truſt me, truſt me, Madam, his heart has never been inconſtant!"

So affecting a picture as Rainsford had here exhibited could not be received without emotion by a heart ſo much intereſted in it as

Amelia's.

Amelia's. She wiſhed not to *betray* irreſolution, however ſhe might *feel* it,—ſhe wiſhed not to give way to tears, which, however, in ſpite of herſelf, would force a paſſage to her eyes. She aroſe from her ſeat, ſtirred the fire, with her hand ſhaking all the time, and her whole frame trembling;—then, ſitting down again, ſhe anſwered with a voice hardly articulate:—

"I know very well, Mr. Rainsford, that your friend has loved me ſincerely; and I once thought it impoſſible that he ever could change. Experience has ſhewn me, fatally ſhewn me, how much I was deceived.—Oh, how have his actions contradicted his profeſſions!—but pray let us drop this converſation; I wiſh to forget that I ever was intereſted in ſuch a man:—Alas! I am afraid that I not only *was*, but am ſo ſtill!"

"Yet, again, Madam, I own the full force of all my friend's indiſcretions, of his culpability with regard to you; but think on the thouſand, thouſand temptations that aſſail a man on all ſides, in the diſſipated, voluptuous country, whither his fate carried him. Indeed,

Indeed, indeed, Mrs. Meadows, much allowance is to be made for one in ſuch a ſituation, young, inexperienced, and hurried on by an impetuoſity of temper, which nothing but age, and reaſon, as it gets a ſtronger aſcendant in his boſom, can correct. But I, who have been witneſs of all his actions for the laſt five years, who have lived on ſuch terms of unreſtrained intercourſe with him, that one only ſecret,—that of his marriage with you, (of which I was ignorant till his frenzy revealed it) was ever concealed from me.—I can ſafely affirm, that his high eſteem and tender affection for you have ſtill been unabated; nor ever reigned in his ſoul with more abſolute and unbounded ſway than at this moment."

"Unabated, Mr. Rainsford!—What, when knowing himſelf to be my wedded huſband, he lived in that abandoned way with other women:—Oh, ſhame, ſhame, the lapſe of youth in one inſtance might be pardonable, but repeated with ſuch groſs aggravations!—Oh, 'tis a hateful ſubject,—let me not think of it."

"I cannot

"I cannot offer to defend my friend, in the inſtance you mention, Madam;—nay, though ignorant how far his engagements with you had gone, I have often reproached him on that account, for the terms on which he lived with Indamora. Yet,—oh! Mrs. Meadows, believe me, that even, while thus circumſtanced, I have ſeen him again and again, take your picture from his boſom and hang over it in raptures that nothing but ardent affection could inſpire; and while he bade me contemplate its charms, "yet," he would ſay, "how poor is painting to imitate the beauty of the original!"

"This is fine rhapſody, Mr. Rainsford; but what then could induce him to preſerve ſuch a ſteady, never-varying ſilence?—Surely, if he had really loved me ſo tenderly, one hour might ſometimes have been ſpared from his Indamora, to tell me ſo."

"Heavens! Madam! you aſtoniſh me; can *you* aſk why your huſband has not written to you?"

"And wherefore ſhould I not aſk it, Sir? Was it not a reaſonable expectation on my part

part that I ſhould ſometimes hear from him? Could he think, that when I had carried my attachment ſo far, as to do what the world muſt think, ſhould it be known, an act of the higheſt imprudence; could he think, after that, that I was indifferent to hearing from him?"

"And could it be, then, that you wiſhed only to try the extent of Charles's affection? Yet, ſurely, if it was ſo, his anſwer muſt have been ſatisfactory?"

"Indeed, Sir, I do not underſtand you.—What was there in my letters to juſtify the ſuppoſition that I was ſporting with him—only trying the extent of his affection?—and as to his anſwer, I never received any."

"Unfortunate, indeed!—and hence has ariſen a fatal train of miſtakes. It was then your intention to relent, and take off your cruel interdict on his application for releaſe. Ah, Madam, excuſe me, but theſe are dangerous experiments."

"Relent—interdict—experiment.—Indeed, Mr. Rainsford, theſe are words which convey no ideas to my mind on the ſubject in queſtion.

queſtion. What I wrote to Mr. Meadows could admit but of one conſtruction."

"I own, Madam, that your words were ſufficiently explicit; but could it be eaſy for a man, in Meadows's ſituation, quietly to acquieſce in ſuch an injunction; and pardon me, I entreat, for ſaying, that I think you would have had much greater ſubject of complaint againſt him, had he patiently complied with your requeſt than for remonſtrating againſt it."

"And was an injunction to write to me frequently, then, ſo very hard to comply with? Was this the ardent love you talk of, Mr. Rainsford?"

"Surely, Mrs. Meadows, my ears deceive me!—or do words ſo change their meaning, in paſſing from England to India, that what, at its leaving the former place, was an injunction to write frequently, ſhould, on its arrival at the latter, be transformed into an injunction not to write at all!—for it is a fact, Madam, I can aſſure you, that the only letter Charles ever received from you, during his

ſtay in India, contained little more than a prohibition of his writing."

"Does Mr. Meadows dare to aſſert this, Sir?—This is worſe than all, to endeavour to varniſh over his own infidelity by the invention of an abſolute falſehood, in order to throw the criminality of his negligence on me."

"A falſehood, Madam!—but I aſk your pardon for this repetition of your words.—Meadows may have been wild, and guilty of errors, but his open and generous heart is incapable of framing a falſehood; your own letter, Madam, will witneſs the truth of what I affirm; and your ſilence, when he petitioned to be releaſed from ſo cruel an interdict, and which he could not but conſider as a confirmation of it, fully exculpates him in not writing to you any more."

"I thank you, Mr. Rainsford, moſt ſincerely thank you, for this viſit, it has ſet my mind entirely at eaſe. I was weak enough to retain ſome latent ſparks of affection for Mr. Meadows, but they are now entirely extinguiſhed. His infidelity alone I might perhaps have pardoned, on a conviction of his thorough

rough reformation; but the man who can have been capable of forging ſuch a ſtory, and, in order to exculpate himſelf, of endeavouring to criminate me, muſt be as baſe as he is falſe, and I ſhould feel degraded in my own eyes were I to ſuffer another word to be ſaid in his behalf. I excuſe you, Sir,—I even reſpect the part you have taken in endeavouring to bring about a reconciliation which, I have no doubt, you conceive would be for our mutual happineſs; and I believe that you, no leſs than myſelf, are the dupe of this man, who, I am now convinced, has a depraved heart. Oh, how unwilling have I been to believe ſo, though repeatedly warned of it, but conviction is now too ſtrong for further reſiſtance."

"Yet, let me ſay one word more; juſtice, mere juſtice, Mrs. Meadows, demands that you hear it. I ſwear by all that is ſacred that I have ſeen the letter I mention: It was written in terms of ſtrong affection for him, but, at the ſame time, injoining him not to write to you, as your keeping up a correſpondence muſt be dangerous to both; and

it was better to forego a temporary ſatisfaction, than to run the riſk of a ſeparation for ever."

"And ſuch a letter Mr. Meadows pretends to have received from me?"

"Pretends, Madam! he actually did receive ſuch a letter; nor can it be a forgery, for it has the Engliſh poſt-mark."

"Well then, let this letter be produced, Mr. Rainsford, and we ſhall ſee how well he has imitated my hand-writing, and the poſt-mark you talk of."

"And if he does produce the letter you will conſent to ſee him?"

"I do not ſay that, but, truſt me, he ſhall have juſtice done him; the letter ſhall have all the weight with me it deſerves; he may have been deceived, there are wicked ſpirits in the world;—yet how is that poſſible?—the wicked ſpirit I fear is in his own boſom!"

"But you will permit me at leaſt, I hope, Madam, to bring you the letter, and talk farther with you on the ſubject."

She ſighed, ſhe caſt a melancholy glance at him.—"Yes," ſhe ſaid, "I will hear all that you

you can ſay, for wherefore ſhould I refuſe it? —Alas, it is but too much for my own intereſt, my own repoſe, that he ſhould vindicate himſelf if poſſible;—but, oh, I ſee ſmall hope of ſatisfaction, it is not a ſingle offence but a ſeries of ill-conduct that has alienated my affections."

Rainsford broke into the warmeſt expreſſions of gratitude for the conſent ſhe had given to ſee him again with the important letter—adding, "Now my friend's pardon is fully ſealed, I haſten therefore to give you all the ſatisfaction you require, Madam." And ſo ſaying he took his leave, in order to return to London without a moment's delay.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER III.

Thou think'st, unknowing both thyself and me,
That closer union would in bliss connect us,
And boldly askest of me tame consent;
I thank the gods that they have giv'n me firmness,
Thus to decline what they have not approv'd.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

ON Rainsford's arrival at Elsham, he had sent his carriage to Batterley, with directions to wait for him at the inn, whither it was his intention to walk after the conclusion of his conference with Amelia. When he had gotten about half a mile from the house, he perceived at a short distance a post-chaise, in which a horse was kicking and plunging, to the extreme alarm of a lady within the carriage. Sworn by his profession to the service

of

of the fair, and urged by his humanity to give his aſſiſtance wherever it could be uſeful, he flew towards the ſpot, and arriving there juſt as the lady had more raſhly than courageouſly opened the chaiſe-door, in order to jump out, he received her in his arms, and placed her in ſafety on her feet. But what was the aſtoniſhment of both when, on their eyes meeting, the one recognized immediately the features of Edward Rainsford, the other thoſe of Anna Byng!

Never was confuſion more complete; ſeven years had elapſed ſince their eyes had experienced a like rencontre; and ſo little were they acquainted with each other's ſituation, that Anna did not know what quarter of the globe Edward might at that time inhabit, and Edward as little knew that Anna lived near Elſham, and was become the intimate friend of Mrs. Anneſley and Mrs. Meadows. The poor affrighted lady was preparing a profuſion of gratitude for her deliverer; but, alas! when ſhe beheld him, her thanks died away on her tongue, nor could ſhe utter a ſyllable, while he turned round to aſſiſt the driver in quieting

the horſe. When this was done, and he learned that the ſervant on horſeback, who ought to have been with the carriage, was loitering behind, he walked away, ſaying, if he ſhould meet him, he would ſend him on; nor dared ſo much as to look again at the lady, who ſtood trembling at a little diſtance: but honour, imperious honour, required that he ſhould leave her thus unnoticed. He would have claſped Anna Byng in his arms, but he ſhrunk from approaching the wife of Mr. Mortimer.

Between the fright occaſioned by the horſe and the hurry of this unexpected interview, Mrs. Mortimer was rendered ſo incapable of going into company, that ſhe gave up her intention of viſiting at Elſham, which was the errand that had called her out; and when ſhe got into the chaiſe again, ſhe ordered the driver to turn about and go home, intimating, that ſhe had been too much frightened to go on. Perhaps, her alarm might not be the ſole cauſe of this order; but though ſhe was herſelf hardly aware of it, ſhe might be ſomewhat influenced by an idea of the poſſibility that by

turning

turning back ſhe might ſtill ſee her beloved Edward once more; and if this had any influence, ſhe was gratified, as the chaiſe overtook him juſt before he entered the inn at Batterley.

It was fortunate, perhaps, for him, that he had a concern on his hands intereſting him ſo deeply as that which he had undertaken for his friend, or the impreſſion received by this meeting might have dwelt on him too powerfully; as it was, his own affair only *ſhared* his attention with Charles's, on which he could now reflect with great ſatisfaction, ſince he hoped he had put it into a promiſing train for a happy concluſion;—and full of this hope, he entered London again only ten hours after his departure.

But theſe ten hours had been like ten days to the anxious and impatient Charles, who, all the time of his abſence, talked to his father inceſſantly of Amelia, ſpeculating on the probable iſſue of his friend's embaſſy; one while inſpired with the moſt ardent hopes of its efficacy, then deſpairing of its anſwering any good purpoſe; and at this rate he was ſtill going on

when he heard a carriage ſtop at the door. It ſeemed the criſis of his fate; a chill damp ſpread over his whole frame; all his limbs ſhivered; his voice, which had been firm, began to falter; he wiſhed to ſpring forwards to meet the expected tidings, but felt himſelf chained to the ſopha on which he lay. Rainsford entered the room, however, with a glow of ſatisfaction on his countenance, which inſtantly changed the ſcene, and inſpired him with ſuch tranſporting hopes, that ſtarting up, he caught his friends hand eagerly, exclaiming, "Come, tell me all; I read ſucceſs in your countenance!"

"Nor are you miſtaken," anſwered Rainsford; and he related what had paſſed between himſelf and Amelia, concluding with deſiring to have the letter to carry with him as a voucher for the truth of his aſſertions.

Charles liſtened with eagerneſs, and with a look of confidence and exultation, keeping Rainsford's hand graſped cloſe, till he learned on what terms alone his pardon was to be conceded, when he dropped it ſuddenly, and ſtarting up, walked haſtily acroſs the room once

or twice, then darting to the window he threw it up in ſuch a hurried manner, that his friend, alarmed, caught hold of him, crying, "What now, Charles?"

The wretched huſband ſtamped on the ground; and ſtriking his hand on his forehead, "Curſed fate!" he exclaimed, "that letter—"

"Oh God, what of it?"

"Aſk me not;—'tis not here."

"How?—what?—not here?"

"Left, left behind!"

"My God, Charles, what negligence!—ſo important a letter!—Left in India do you ſay?"

"In a caſket, packed with the greateſt care."

"And wherefore left?"

"By a curſed chance!—the cheſt which contains it was, through careleſſneſs, never put on board the ſhip."

"And how know you that?"

"My ſervant told it me with trembling during the voyage."

"Good God! good God! and is it really ſo? Never, ſurely, was any thing ſo unfortu-

nate! What ſhall I do?—Amelia will now conſider all I have told her as a forgery. But I will, nevertheleſs, ſee her again, though I hardly know what I can ſay, or how I ſhall be received."

"Do you think, then, that this can make ſuch a difference? Can ſhe make no allowance for accident?"

"Oh, I know not what to think, this muſt appear ſo ſuſpicious to one who has already been led by untoward circumſtances to view your conduct with perverted eyes."

"Edward, Edward, I ſee the whole matter but too plainly; ſhe is falſe, ſhe is tired of me, and only wiſhes for ſome fair pretence for throwing the charge of deſertion upon me.—Oh, how have I been deceived! I thought that in her I had found that rare phœnomenon, a female without art or diſguiſe; but curſes light on the whole ſyren ſex, and her among the reſt; and here I ſwear——"

"Charles, I will have no execrations; no raſh reſolutions."

"Yes, I muſt ſwear, by all that's ſacred, that if ſhe be going to marry Dawkins,—"

"And

"And can you ſuppoſe it?—Wait till I have ſeen her again, ere you condemn her."

"Well then, I will; but let the Syren know——"

"I will not be the bearer of any intemperance, Charles; neither will I ſtir, unleſs you give me your moſt ſolemn aſſurance to be quiet while I am gone."

"Oh, yes, I will, indeed;—truſt me then. Upon my ſoul, I'll be perfectly compoſed;—go therefore, directly."

"Dare I truſt you?"

"You may, indeed! you may rely upon me."

Rainsford ventured on the reliance which he entreated, and departed again for Elſham, though with a heart aching for the ſucceſs of his miſſion. He entered the room with a ſtep of heſitation, and a look of the deepeſt dejection. "Mrs. Meadows," he ſaid, "I ſcarcely know how to appear before you again; I have no hope now but in your candour and mercy; the letter I mentioned is moſt unfortunately left in India."

"Left in India, Mr. Rainsford! I am aſtoniſhed,

ſtoniſhed, indeed, at your coming a ſecond time on no better errand than to be the bearer of ſuch a paltry excuſe."

"Mrs. Meadows, forgive me in ſaying ſo, but indeed you are too ſevere; I am confident that Charles has repreſented the matter truly; do but hear him then in his defence, I will ſtake my life on his conſtancy and affection."

"Oh that zeal and friendſhip ſuch as yours, Mr. Rainsford, were but engaged in a better cauſe! I honour and reſpect them, but I can hear no more. This letter he ventured to ſhew *you*, for *you* could not detect its falſehood; to *me*, it is plain, he dares not ſhow it. Hear, therefore, my laſt reſolve, and bear it to Mr. Meadows: Say to him, that a man who can have been guilty of ſuch groſs exceſſes in his infidelity, who, though my huſband, could ſo entirely neglect me; and then, to palliate his own miſconduct, have recourſe to a baſe and palpable forgery, in order to make me appear the criminal, muſt have a heart ſo depraved, that I ſhould feel degraded in my own eſtimation, were I to hold any farther intercourſe with him: The law would allow me

to

to conſider myſelf as at full liberty, but of that ſubterfuge I ſhall never avail myſelf; he ſhall ſee that no other paſſion has influenced me to the reſolution I have taken, but ſolely a ſenſe of his unworthineſs; and while I am reſolved never to live with him as his wife, I am no leſs reſolved never to liſten to the addreſſes of any other man. Tell him, that from my ſoul I wiſh for his reformation and happineſs; and while I feel it my duty to act thus, my heart is almoſt broken in reflecting, that the man towards whom I am compelled to practiſe ſuch ſeverity, is the ſame whom I have loved from my childhood with the tendereſt exceſs. Say too, as a word of encouragement, (yet why do I flatter myſelf that from me he will think it ſo) that nothing upon earth could give me ſo much tranſport as to hear that he was thoroughly recalled from the paths of vice, and his mind reſtored to its original bias; that he were become, ah bleſſed idea! once more worthy of the pure and ardent paſſion which I long felt, and could then feel for him again.—Farewel, Mr. Rainsford, I cannot ſupport this ſcene any longer."—

So

So ſaying ſhe aroſe, and with difficulty tottered out of the room with her face drowned in tears.

Rainsford beheld and liſtened to her with aſtoniſhment; there was an awful ſolemnity in the manner in which ſhe had pronounced her huſband's doom, that penetrated his very ſoul. He ſaw how painful a conflict her feelings ſuſtained, between love for the man and what ſhe thought a juſt indignation againſt his vices, and he hid his face in his handkerchief while he wept over this fatal ſeparation of two affectionate hearts, victims to a moſt unaccountable fate, and which never could be happy till re-united. But all that remained now, was to exert every effort to reconcile his friend to his loſs; and for this purpoſe, he returned again to London with the utmoſt expedition.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER IV.

——— Ye cruel Maids!
When first ye 'gan to weave my woof of fate,
Ye dy'd it with the roseate hue of Spring!—
At length the Raven croak'd; with joy ye snatch'd
The cords of Woe, and dipp'd th' unfinish'd web
Deep in the pitchy waters of Deſpair!

SAYERS.

CHARLES had promiſed Rainsford to be quiet while he was abſent, and he was faithful to his word; he had never ſtirred from the ſpot where he left him, but ſat in a kind of ſtupid anxiety, unwilling quite to give up the cauſe as loſt, yet ſcarcely daring to hope otherwiſe. When he ſaw his friend enter the room, he eagerly cried,— "No preamble, Rainsford; no attempts to ſoften my fate; tell me faithfully, and without heſitation, all that has paſſed."

Rainsford

Rainsford complied, and told him the whole at once; but how was he aſtoniſhed to find his relation received with a loud and immoderate burſt of laughter. "Ridiculous enough," cried Charles; "and thus I have been fooled! I thought it poſſible for faith to dwell in a female boſom, and that the world injured the ſex when it ſaid otherwiſe; but now, thank God," (claſping his hands eagerly together) "I am at laſt undeceived; am convinced what women are, and my heart is at eaſe; yes, perfectly at eaſe; never was I ſo free, never ſo happy, as at this moment! Let her not ſuppoſe that it is in her power to make me miſerable, while ſhe is revelling in the arms of her gallants!—She might well inſiſt, indeed, that the marriage *ceremony* alone ſhould paſs between us; ſhe knew that the Law could beat down the fabric which the Church only had raiſed up!—Curſe the Church! Curſe the Law! What have they to do with Love?

Love, free as air, at ſight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.

POPE.

No

No more then will I ſeek Church and Law engagements; let them be hurled to damnation together, or along with that falſe, that faithleſs, that ——— But I will not curſe her; let her, if ſhe can, enjoy herſelf in the arms of her minion, Dawkins: Are there not female Dawkins's enough in this town, fair as herſelf, and kind as ſhe is cold? Come, come, Rainsford, why you look as melancholy as if you were wedded, and had ſealed the contract paſt redemption; while I, releaſed from my deviliſh bargain, am as merry—as merry, as —curſe the ſimiles, my head is ſo ſtrange!—Yes, I never was ſo eaſy, never in ſuch good ſpirits in all my life! And now, I ſhall ſcamper about, and be as diſſipated;—oh, I'll outdo all that ever went before me; and ſo ſhall you too, Don Gravity, with your formal phiz! And then, when I am tired here, away again for India, dear, dear India; for I am in a damned hurry to be again on the banks of the Ganges! And I ſay, Ned, that fertile ſtream, perhaps, may preſent me with another dear little Indamora! Ah, ſhe was dear, indeed! Was ſhe not, Ned? She never ——— Here

he

he ſighed deeply, and ſat for a few minutes as if loſt in contemplation; but then ſuddenly ſtarting from his ſeat: "Well, Ned," he cried, "What ſhall we do? Whither ſhall we go? I long to be on the wing. What ſignifies talking of being mad, and having fevers! Are not all the world mad? And have not all the world fevers?

> Then why ſhould not we be as mad as they?
> So away, my Pylades, haſte away!"

This ſtate of phrenzy was, if poſſible, more ſhocking and alarming than that from which he had lately emerged, as it ſeemed even more hopeleſs of cure; and Rainsford ſat in an agony, with his head reclined on his hand, revolving in his mind what could be done with his poor frantic Oreſtes, when the latter caught him ſuddenly by the arm, and pulling him violently towards the door of the room, "Come along," he ſaid, "I am going to the theatre, for I don't ſee any ſenſe in ſighing and moping here about a ſilly woman! Curſe her! damn her! What a deviliſh fool that old Father Adam muſt have been, that he could not be

contented

contented with his own company, but muſt beg to have a wife forſooth!—Well, well, 'tis all mighty well; a wife he had, and a pretty kettle of fiſh ſhe made in the world as ſoon as ſhe came into it!—— Humph—ſhe ate an apple, and her whole progeny was damned for her ſake!—Faith, it was but a damned trick in her!—but, no matter for that, her daughters——"

He was running on with this ſtrange jargon, when Rainsford, collecting himſelf for a painful effort on which he had reſolved, looked ſternly at him, and with an authoritative tone and manner, ſeized him by the hands, and, before he was aware, thruſt him into a chair, where he held him faſt, ſaying, "By heaven! you ſtir not from hence till you know how to conduct yourſelf with greater propriety." Charles, aſtoniſhed, looked at him earneſtly for a moment; but Rainsford had aſſumed a ſtern and awe-inſpiring countenance, ſuch as he had never been accuſtomed to behold, and he caſt down his eyes with an inexpreſſible ſenſation of terror. Thrice he eſſayed to raiſe them again, but ſuch penetrating glances

glances were not to be borne, and he ſhrunk within himſelf, till, at length, overpowered by agony, he burſt into tears.

This was the criſis that Rainsford wiſhed; this was the relief which his unhappy friend's overcharged boſom ſo much wanted. There was no occaſion for farther harſhneſs; he quitted his hold, and drawing a chair, ſat down by Charles for awhile, without taking notice of him, till perceiving him relieved by this paroxyſm of agony, and growing more compoſed, he took his hand affectionately, and ſaid, "Charles!"

Charles raiſed his eyes, and met thoſe of Rainsford; they bore no longer that fierce, that awful expreſſion, which had ſo overpowered him, but had reſumed their uſual kindneſs and affection; and he felt himſelf ſo ſoothed, that, throwing his arms round his neck, he cried, "Oh, my true, my only friend, your medicine was ſevere but ſalutary! My brain was turning, but you have reſtored me to myſelf. Let us fly this hated town, however; after all that I have ſuffered, I cannot bear to ſtay in it. I will go down to Milſingtown for a while,

a while, and then return to India, there to devote the reſt of my life to my dear child, and endeavour ſo to educate her, that ſhe may be as happy as her father is miſerable."

"And will you really go to Milſingtown? go and make a family happy who are waiting with open arms to receive you? will you no more give way to theſe fits of deſpondency?"

"Truſt me, I will not!—And wherefore ſhould I deſpond, wherefore repine? though vexation and diſappointment have croſſed me in one inſtance, happineſs ſtill awaits me in other ways;—though I have found woman falſe, man has proved true; and if love has been my bane, friendſhip has been its antidote!—Yes, Rainsford, yes, my friend, your faithful boſom ſhall be the granary in which I will ſtore up a rich harveſt of delight. Sufferers alike from the barbed arrows of diſappointed affection, be it ours to ſeek from each other's heart the balm to heal the wounds which rankle in our own. But, oh, a female friend!—let me not think of it!—thought is diſtraction!—I muſt diſſipate it by action!—Let us then get a chaiſe and ſet off directly

for

for Milſingtown—there ſhall I meet with females whoſe artleſs open hearts will not treat me as ——" He ſtopped—he was wandering again upon the brink of a precipice, and he ſunk his head on Rainsford's ſhoulder.

"Directly!—why would you go directly?—wait till to-morrow; a night's reſt will compoſe you, and render you more capable of undertaking the journey."

"No, I cannot bear a moment's delay, let me fly inſtantly from this hated ſcene."

"And what do you propoſe to yourſelf from this exceſſive haſte?—Oh, Charles, let me intreat you to reflect but for a moment!—Change of place may indeed be ſalutary, but it is not from that alone that you muſt expect a remedy for the anguiſh you ſuffer; the full remedy lies only in your own boſom. The mind, the mind, Charles, muſt be its own cure—all its energies muſt be exerted—they muſt indeed!"

"You think my conduct weak then?"

"I do, I confeſs, and wiſh to ſee you more manly."

"Oh, Rainsford, friend of my ſoul! teach me

me then how this energy is to be exerted; teach me to forget, to hate her!"

"And wherefore would you hate her? perhaps, after all, she may be more an object of pity than hatred."

"Tell me not so, I would not for worlds think her an object of pity, for then I must love her still."

"Think not either of love or hatred.—Think, that from causes, which I am convinced we do not as yet comprehend, she is lost to you for the present, perhaps for ever, —but think also, that this is not a reason why you should determine to be for ever miserable.—Not to feel, deeply to feel, this separation, would shew you more senseless than a block or a statue;—to suffer it to gain such an ascendancy as to cut you off from every other source of enjoyment, and injure your health or reason, would shew you as weak as the other would shew you senseless. Charles, my dear Charles, do not think me severe, do not think me unfeeling to sorrows which experience has taught me are very hard to be-borne; but believe me when I say, that how-

ſoever ſevere, it is from indolence of mind alone that a man ever ſinks under them;—time and reſolution can ſubdue the moſt poignant affliction;—ſhew yourſelf a man then, ſeek not to hate the object you once loved, but determine to reaſon yourſelf out of a paſſion which is now hopeleſs; and that determination once made is more than half carried into execution."

"Oh, my beſt friend, my only true phyſician, you have acquired indeed the ſingular art of "*miniſtering to a mind diſeaſed.*"—Yes, I will reſolve to get the better of this ill-fated paſſion—yet you know not what a taſk you impoſe!—This, this, is the woman you bid me think of with compoſure,"—and he drew from his boſom the picture of Amelia which he had ſo long cheriſhed there—"theſe are the eyes—but no—I will not look at them! Take it, Edward, take it,—my firſt exertion muſt be to tear from my boſom ſo dangerous an inmate!—Oh I could now daſh it againſt the ground, kick it, ſpurn it, trample on it—take it—take it out of my ſight."

Rainsford, rejoiced to ſee him capable of making

making this effort, took the picture and put it into his pocket, in doing which Charles had once ſeized his hand, but immediately quitted his hold again, exclaiming with a look of exultation, "Now my victory is complete!"

Rainsford finding how far his medicines had already ſucceſsfully operated, ſtopped not till he had reaſoned Charles into a tolerably compoſed ſtate of mind, who met his father (fortunately abſent during this ſcene) at his return, with a calmneſs which precluded the good old man from entertaining any ſuſpicion of what had paſſed, while a ſignificant look from Rainsford forbade him to enquire at that time any farther into the ſtate of his ſon's affairs. This was afterwards imparted to him in private, nor could he fail to ſympathize moſt deeply in ſo ſevere a diſappointment. He heard, however, with the trueſt pleaſure, of Charles's intention of going down to Milſingtown, for which place they ſet out on the following morning.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER V.

My native scenes! can aught in time or space,
From this fond Heart your lov'd remembrance chase?
Link'd to that heart by ties for ever dear,
By Joy's light smile, and Sorrow's tender tear;
By all that e'er my anxious hopes employ'd,
By all my Soul has suffer'd or enjoy'd!
Still blended with those well-known scenes arise
The varying images the paſt supplies.

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

WHAT a croud of tender and melancholy, of delightful and affecting images, thronged into Charles's mind, when on arriving at the ſummit of the hill whence he had laſt beheld his native bowers, thoſe much-loved ſcenes again appeared in view; he claſped his hands together in an extaſy, as he pointed out to his friend the chimnies that marked the ſpot where ſtood the rectory; and

then

then turning eagerly to his father, and catching hold of his hand, "Oh God!" he exclaimed, "that I had never known other ſcenes than thoſe which ſurround that ſequeſtered abode; nor other cares but what I experienced under my paternal roof!—But there," ſaid he, pointing towards Sherborne, "*there is the tomb of my departed peace!* in that manſion which I once thought the centre of all earthly felicity!"

When arrived at his beloved home, he eagerly burſt open the chaiſe door, and in a moment was in the arms of an aged mother, whoſe tranſports at ſeeing him alive, after all the dangers he had encountered, are ſcarcely to be conceived. One ſiſter only was then at Milſingtown to ſhare in her mother's joy; the reſt of the family were all diſperſed, and ſettled in various parts of the kingdom; but when informed of Charles's arrival at the rectory, they all aſſembled from their different places of reſidence to hail the return of ſo ardently beloved a brother, and to gladden the heart of the venerable patriarch their father, with the

ſight of all his children once more collected around him.

In this abode of peace and affection Charles ſpent three months, in which he acquired a degree of health and compoſure, almoſt beyond his father's hopes, and he determined only to go over to India to ſettle his affairs there and fetch his little Indamora, and then return and fix his abode in ſome quiet part of England, where his life ſhould be devoted to her education; for, he ſaid, the fortune he had already acquired was ſufficient for her and himſelf, and he had now no other object for whom he could wiſh to increaſe it. Had his brothers and ſiſters been in want of his aſſiſtance he might not, perhaps, ſo eaſily have relinquiſhed his profitable ſituation in the Eaſt; but they were all in comfortable circumſtances, and thus his only remaining wiſh was to enjoy the fortune he had already acquired, in a ſmall and ſelect circle of friends, whoſe ſociety might make him forget the object for the ſake of whom he had firſt attempted its acquiſition.

But if in general he was pleaſed and happy during

during his ſtay at Milſingtown, one circumſtance gave him more peculiar ſatisfaction by enabling him to diſcharge a debt of gratitude, which, till then, he knew not that he had incurred. It will be ſuppoſed, that his old friend Horton was not neglected on this occaſion; and indeed Charles went to ſee him only the day after his arrival. He found him well in health, but diſtreſſed in mind on account of one of his ſons, who had been in a very good way of buſineſs, but was now reduced to great difficulties by a heavy loſs from fire; and unleſs a pretty conſiderable ſum of money could be raiſed, he was in danger of having his effects ſeized immediately, being himſelf declared a bankrupt, and with a wife and four children reduced almoſt to beggary. As ſoon as Charles heard this ſtory, he inſtantly took on himſelf to be anſwerable for the ſum wanted in addition to what Horton himſelf could furniſh, and thus the young man was enabled to go on in his buſineſs with a comfortable proſpect of entirely retrieving his affairs by time and induſtry.

In the many viſits which our hero made to

his old friend, it will be ſuppoſed that this matter became a very frequent topic of their converſation: But it did not, however, occupy them ſo entirely, but that various other affairs of importance came alſo under diſcuſſion; ſuch as, for inſtance, Miſs Blandford's marriage, with her brother's indignation when firſt it was made known to him, and ſubſequent reconciliation; alſo Mr. Blandford's own marriage, and the domeſtic œconomy of his family, with the very great improvement that had taken place in his manners ſince his intercourſe with Dawkins had ceaſed, a ſubject on which the Steward dwelt with particular pleaſure. "Why, Lord bleſs you, Sir," he ſaid, "as I told you before you went away, when firſt he came from abroad, to be ſure there was no ſuch a thing as ſpeaking to him, no, not if it were never ſo; he'd juſt hear what I had to ſay about his own affairs; but then, if I ſaid another word, it was all huffing, and, "for God's ſake, Horton, don't begin prating, you've told me all I want to know, and that's enough for me," and ſnubbing and ſnarling; but now, thank God, he

ſpeaks

ſpeaks quite good-natured, and aſks me about my family, and takes notice of my little grand-children when I have any of 'em with me; but this alteration, I look upon it, is partly owing to madam, who, to be ſure, is one of the beſt-natured ladies in the world.'—Then he would advert to the diſappointments which Dawkins had experienced, in which the old gentleman ſeemed to feel a pleaſure, perhaps not quite conſiſtent with pure philanthropy, but for which he found an apology, in the haughty demeanour the tutor had always obſerved towards himſelf, as well as all the other dependents of his pupil.

In one of theſe converſations they had, naturally enough, talked over the melancholy death of Mr. Blandford, and the chain of conſequences that attended it, when Charles at laſt mentioned the ſum which had been [illegible] him in ſo ſingular a manner, and which had determined him to ſeek his fortune in the Eaſt. "I have always wiſhed earneſtly, Horton," he ſaid, "that I could aſcertain to whom I was indebted for that bounty, ſince I ſhould conſider it as an eſſential duty to repay it with

intereſt; I ſuſpected, indeed, that it came from Mrs. St. Aubyn, and endeavoured to find out whether it were ſo or not, but I never could make it out clearly.—A perſon, it is true, who was once my friend, one day hinted to me that ſhe knew who my benefactor was, and that it was not her aunt.—Oh, could I but know whether it were ſhe herſelf!"

He could not proceed—his voice was quite gone—he had, indeed, with ſome difficulty, ſaid ſo much. The old man, by an irreſiſtible impulſe, eagerly took his hand, and preſſing it affectionately, "My dear, dear, young friend," he ſaid, "you have repaid it with intereſt, with uſurious intereſt indeed—you have reſtored my unfortunate ſon to happineſs and proſperity—you have made him bleſſed again in the boſom of his family, and relieved my poor old heart from an affliction that was almoſt weighing me down!—Oh, the paltry gift is re-paid a hundred and a hundred times."

Charles looked at him with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment:—"What is it I hear," he cried, "you, Horton?—is it to you that I owe the

the foundation of my fortune — to you, worthy good old man?"

"Oh, yes, yes, — I could not bear to see you so cast down and heart broken, — I could not bear to see how you were used; would to God that I had then had more, it should all have been yours — for, by heaven, I loved you as if you had been my own child!"

Charles lifted up his hands and eyes with an involuntary transport of surprise and admiration, exclaiming, "Can this be really so! hear it, ye hosts of heaven! and echo the sound, oh earth, from pole to pole! — The lordly landlord, the possessor of thousands, could deny me from his ample stores, the small portion which justice demanded, while the lowly steward, from his humble pittance, gave me his all — yes, his all!" — and in a transport of extasy at the noble action he was contemplating, he threw his arms around the neck of the old man, seeming to forget, at that moment, that such things as vice or misfortune had existence in the world.

"Come, come," said the Steward, "pray, my dear Mr. Charles, do not think so much

about this matter!—I did not want the money at that time, and you did, and ſo it was moſt right to be ſure that you ſhould have it; and now that you are rich, which thank God a thouſand and a thouſand times for it, and one of my family was in want, why, it was all right enough that you ſhould help him, and ſo now we are even as one may ſay."

"Kind, generous-hearted old man!—I would attempt to give due applauſe to ſentiments ſo exalted, but the conſcious rectitude of ſuch a heart as yours, is its own beſt applauſe and reward. But now, my good friend, let me hear all about the affair. How little did I ever ſuſpect to whom I was under ſo great an obligation!"

And never could he have repaid the obligation in a way more pleaſing to his benefactor, than in deſiring him to relate all the particulars of the affair:—"What, may I tell you all about it?" he ſaid, preſſing his hand affectionately, "for there's a lady concerned"——

"Oh, yes, yes, you may tell me all about it—you may tell me about her too—yes, yes,

Horton,

Horton, you may—you may tell me about her"——

"Ah, pray God it may all come to rights again at laſt—for to be ſure—but I don't know—ſome folks——"

"Well, well, but the ſtory—the ſtory, Horton!"

"Why, then, to be ſure, Sir, my heart was ſo vexed about you, to think how that you ſhould be cut off with no fortune at all; for I knew that Mr. Meadows, your good father, had'nt money at that time, becauſe he had juſt ſpent all his little ſavings, and God knows, ſuch men as he, with a large family, who muſt live like gentlefolks, never can ſave no great matters: As I was ſaying, I knew that he had ſcraped all the money together he could, to help to buy a living for the gentleman that was juſt married to your ſiſter Winny, and then he reckoned that all the reſt that he could ſave ſhould be for Miſs Sophy, your youngeſt ſiſter that's now unmarried, for, you know, he had done ſomewhat for all his other children, and he never looked to have any thing to do for you, becauſe

cauſe of the goodneſs of Mr. Blandford, your godfather, who always ſaid he would provide for you; and who, God knows, would have done it handſomely, if it had pleaſed God to ſpare him a little longer, for, to be ſure, he was as good a gentleman as ever lived, and never went from his word in nothing; and it was not his intentions no more to go from his word then, if it had not been for that unlucky accident that he met with. But ſo, Sir, as I was ſaying, I knew that your good father could not, at that time, do any thing for you, and ſo I thought, within myſelf, that what I had, might do you ſome good, and it would be ſuch a pleaſure to my heart to do you a ſervice, becauſe you always was ſo kind and good-natured to me, and ſo free with my poor boys, talking to 'em, and playing with 'em, all quite as though they had been your equals; and indeed, for that matter, they wasn't ſo ignorant neither, for I always thought it was the beſt way to give them learning, and a good education, and ſet them out in buſineſs, and then they muſt ſhift for themſelves; for, ſays I, I have worked, and there's no

reaſon

reaſon why they ſhould'nt work too; that was always my way of thinking. And ſo I goes to Miſs Amelia, and tells her what I had in my mind; and ſhe ſays to me, with all the freedom and good-nature in the world, "Why, Horton," ſays ſhe, "to be ſure, the money might be of great uſe to Mr. Meadows; but then, I am certain, he never would deprive you of the ſavings of your honeſt induſtry."—"Pray don't talk of that, ma'am," ſays I, "for if I can but help to make Mr. Charles happy, I ſhall think it the greateſt pleaſure of my life, for there's ne'er a one of my own children that I love better than Mr. Charles; though, God knows, I a'nt ſo bad a father neither, but I have done my duty by them, and loved them as well as any father in the world ever loved his children.—And ſo," ſays I, "if you would be ſo good, young lady, as to write a letter, ſuch as you think would do, to ſend with it, I'll ſend them now, out of hand, and he ſhan't ſo much as know who they came from, and then he can't help accepting it you know, ma'am."—So then, ſays Miſs Amelia, "Yes, but Horton, you ſhall

make

make me one promiſe before I conſent to this, or write the letter for you; and that is, that if ever I have money enough in my power to pay you, you will let me do it." — "No, ma'am," ſays I, "that I never will grant; but if ever Mr. Charles gets to be a rich man, as God knows, I hope he will, then I'll tell him all about it, and he ſhall pay me the money again;" and ſo with that ſhe ſays, "very well," and then ſhe writes the letter directly, and I ſends that and the money, and thank God it has done you good: And when Madam St. Aubyn died, Miſs Amelia wanted ſadly to have paid me, but I never would let her; and ſo now, my dear young man, you know all about it; and, thank God, I have lived to ſee you as rich as ſuch a good, generous, brave-hearted young fellow deſerves to be; and pray God, ſome time or other, ſome folks may think different from what they do now."

"Well, well," ſaid Charles, "don't let us talk any more about it; I know very well, Horton, that I ought to ſay a great deal on this occaſion; but what words could do juſ-

tice

tice to worth ſuch as yours?—I once wiſhed for wealth, for I thought the want of that the only bar to my happineſs; you furniſhed me the means by which I have obtained it, and I am now more miſerable than ever;—but, come, no more of this!" and turning the converſation to other matters, in a ſhort time after he took his leave.

CHAPTER

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER VI.

Is ought so fair
In all the dewy landscape of the spring,
In the bright eye of Hesper or the morn;
In Nature's fairest form is ought so fair
As virtuous friendship?

AKENSIDE.

IT has appeared that Rainsford went down to Milsingtown with his friend; but he remained there only a few days, when he went to make visits to several of his former acquaintance. At parting, it was agreed between him and Charles that they should meet again in London, when the time of their return to India should be fixed; and there they accordingly met, after a separation of five months, the last two of which our hero had spent in making a short stay with each of his brothers

brothers and ſiſters. During all that time he had appeared conſtantly recovering both his health and ſpirits, and he left his parents eaſy and contented on that account, and overjoyed with the idea that he was ſoon to return to England to quit it no more. Rainsford, on meeting him again in this amended ſtate, rejoiced exceedingly, and flattered himſelf that his mind was perfectly ſettled, and that he had reaſoned himſelf into a quiet reſignation to his fate.

But, alas! only a very few days after his return to London, all theſe flattering proſpects were in a moment over-clouded, and he gave a lamentable teſtimony, that however firmly his reaſon might appear to be re-eſtabliſhed, it was not proof againſt every ſhock it might be fated to encounter. There was at that time a Methodiſt Preacher whoſe fame was ſo high in his calling, that he attracted the attention of the whole metropolis, and perſons of all perſuaſions and denominations, flocked to hear him, from motives of curioſity at leaſt, if not from thoſe of religion. As Charles one day was paſſing through a

ſtreet

ſtreet not far from his own lodging, he obſerved a great croud aſſembled about the door of a large building, and enquiring the occaſion of it, was informed that this Apoſtle was even at that moment aſcending his pulpit. Being quite at leiſure, he was tempted to add another to the already overflowing audience, and by means of the moſt powerful perſuaſive that could be uſed, (a bribe) he obtained a ſeat where he could hear and ſee the orator to the greateſt advantage.

The ſubject he had choſen for that day's diſcourſe was the old ſtory of the almoſt innumerable diſappointments and mortifications to which this life is ſubject, from which, (as theſe fall alike upon the virtuous and the wicked) he was, as uſual, to extract arguments in favour of a future ſtate. In treating this ſubject, he drew ſeveral caſes by way of illuſtration, till at length he came to one ſo ſimilar to Charles's, that it ſeemed as if he really meant to pourtray that individually; and this was done in a manner ſo impreſſive and pathetic, that even indifferent perſons were wrought up to ſuch a pitch of emotion, that

tears

tears involuntarily ſtreamed down their cheeks. What then muſt be the feelings of Charles himſelf, to whom every word ſpake daggers? It was more than he could bear, and, trembling with agitation, he roſe up to leave the meeting while it was yet in his power.

But as he turned round to make his way towards the door, his eyes accidently glanced into a pew towards which his back had been hitherto turned, when,—oh fatal moment for ſuch an encounter!—whoſe ſhould they meet but thoſe of Amelia herſelf. This was too much; his brain was inſtantly on fire! and before it was poſſible for any one to be aware what he was about, he drew a knife from his pocket, and, darting a wild and furious look at her, plunged it into his breaſt, exclaiming, "Traitreſs, this is your deed!"

The wildneſs of his appearance, the words he uttered, and the raſh action he had committed, were too much for Amelia, and ſhe fainted into the arms of Mr. Anneſley, as Charles ſunk ſenſeleſs into thoſe of the perſons around him. A ſcene of terrible confuſion enſued; one part of the congregation

was

was immediately occupied by the wounded man, the other by the fainting lady, and all attention to the preacher was entirely at an end. They drew the knife from the wound, which was followed by a ſtream of blood; and while ſome endeavoured to ſtop the effuſion with their handkerchiefs, others were running for medical aſſiſtance: but in this they were fortunately prevented by the very ſurgeon who had attended Charles in his former phrenzy. He had been ſitting in a gallery of the meeting, when perceiving a great confuſion, and learning that a man had ſtabbed himſelf, he inſtantly went down and made his way through the croud to the ſpot where he was wanted.

Seeing and knowing who the unfortunate man was, he had him immediately conveyed to his lodgings, when on examining the wound he found it dangerous indeed, but not mortal, and he dreſſed it and got him to bed, where his ſenſes ſoon returned, but with them a train of ſuch dreadful feelings and recollections, that a ſtatue muſt almoſt have been moved with the ſufferings they occaſioned. Nothing now would ſatisfy him but that he ſhould be immediately

immediately put on board the ſhip that was to convey him to India; and at length, in order to compoſe his mind, which was moſt eſſential to his cure, this was complied with; yet ſuch was his ſtate, that his death might be expected almoſt at any part of the voyage, and ſmall indeed appeared the hopes that he could reach India alive.

Thus was Rainsford's friendſhip once more put to a ſevere trial; but it was proof againſt all, and with an aſſiduity as unwearied as if this had been the firſt time he was called on to perform ſo melancholy a taſk, he watched his ſuffering friend day and night, inſenſible to fatigue or confinement himſelf, while he ſaw one to whom he was ſo cloſely united in affection, in a ſtate of ſo much danger.

'—— what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
A shade that follows wealth and fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep!

Thus Goldſmith writes;—but thus could he not have written had he beheld ſuch an inſtance as that before us, where each trial of friendſhip

friendſhip, ſo far from weakening its force, ſeemed rather to give it added firmneſs, and the more wretched the object became to whom it had attached itſelf, the more ardently it was followed through all its miſeries.

While ſuch was the ſituation of Charles, that of Amelia was ſcarcely leſs deplorable. She was conveyed ſenſeleſs from the meeting, and a ſucceſſion of hyſterics ſucceeded her fainting fit. When ſhe was tolerably recovered from theſe, no object ſeemed preſent to her mind but her huſband, in the ſituation in which ſhe had laſt beheld him; and ſhe conſtantly inſiſted, that in the wildneſs and deſpair which then overſpread his countenance, ſuch ſtrong traces of truth and innocence were impreſſed, that it was impoſſible he could be the guilty perſon he had been repreſented; and though the whole world were now to become evidence againſt him, ſhe would believe the proofs ſhe had in his favour before them all. She was firmly reſolved, therefore, ſhe ſaid, to ſee, and enter into a full explanation with him, when ſhe did not doubt but he would give a ſatisfactory ſolution of all the myſterious

rious parts of his conduct, and that they ſhould be reſtored to mutual confidence and happineſs.

And ſo, no doubt, ſuch a conference would have ended had it taken place; but the Deſtinies, in weaving their woof, had decreed, that they ſhould be debarred every clue which might lead to a diſentanglement of the maze of difficulties in which they were involved. Thus, as ſoon as Amelia had hinted an idea of ſeeing Charles, her friends, who conſidered it as the mere effect of phrenzy, guarded her with a vigilance, which, for a long time, ſhe ſought in vain to elude. At length, however, ſhe found means ſecretly to diſpatch a letter, in which ſhe pathetically deſcribed her feelings and ſituation; aſſured him of her ſincere regret for the ſeverity ſhe had practiſed; and that ſhe had now no other wiſh but to ſee him, to hear what he had to ſay in his juſtification, and to find that ſhe had been miſled in the unfavourable opinion ſhe had conceived of his conduct; concluding with a requeſt that he would come down to Elſham and claim her as his wife, to which ſhe would yield without

heſitation. But, alas! his letter was returned on her hands, with the mortifying intelligence that her huſband had ſailed for India three days before.

She felt this almoſt as a death ſtroke, yet could fully enter into the motives which had prompted his haſty departure, and arraigned herſelf ſeverely for having, with ſo much inflexibility, refuſed to ſee him when he firſt came over. His figure, pale and frantic, plunging the knife into his breaſt, and reproaching her as the cauſe of his raſhneſs, was always preſent to her eyes; and his voice never ceaſed for a moment to vibrate in her ears: If ſhe ſat in her room he was there; if ſhe ſought to loſe remembrance in her favourite bower, he was there alſo; nor could ſleep afford a tranſient reſpite to her torments, for he was ſtill the object of her dreams; till at length ſhe ſomewhat relieved her agony by opening her heart to him in a letter, which ſhe contrived to get on board the Bengal packet, unknown to her friends.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER VII.

Where now, ye idle vanities of life,
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train,
Where are ye now, and what is your amount?
Vexation, disappointment, and remorse!

THOMSON.

PALE, weak, emaciated, and impreſſed with a lively conviction of the juſt picture of life contained in the above reflections of the Poet's, was our hero conveyed aboard the ſhip, and laid in his allotted hammock,—that hammock, in which, from all probable appearances, he would be conſigned to his laſt home, at the bottom of the boundleſs ocean. Yet, feeble as he was, when he heard the ſhouts of the ſailors at heaving the anchor, he made an effort to join his voice in thoſe ſounds of joy, while a gleam of tranquil

ſatisfaction overſpread his countenance; and preſſing the hand of Rainsford, he emphatically exclaimed, "Thank heaven, my miſeries are now at an end! I have quitted theſe rugged ſhores, and its more rugged inhabitants, for ever;—oh, might I but live to claſp my child once more in my arms!—but I dare not indulge that hope."

Yet a few weeks wrought ſo great a change in the alarming aſpect his wound had hitherto worn, that his caſe ſeemed not altogether deſperate; indeed, a ſhort but flattering period intervened, when the greateſt hopes were entertained by his friend of his perfect reſtoration. But theſe were too ſoon again blaſted when it became obvious, that though all *immediate* apprehenſions for his life were diſperſed, yet he was ſinking into a gradual decline, which would carry him not leſs ſurely, though more ſlowly, to his grave. His mind, however, daily attained greater compoſure, till, by the time he arrived at Calcutta, it was lulled into ſuch a ſtate of ſtill ſerenity, that it ſeemed as if no earthly object or event could have power to ruffle it again. Not that he

he was become abſolutely inſenſible to the things of this world, his child could yet intereſt him, he could yet feel anxiety to ſee her; but it was an anxiety diveſted of that impetuoſity of paſſion which had ſo often hurried him into the wildeſt exceſſes.

The rumour that he was on board the packet which had juſt arrived, had reached Mr. Benington's houſe before he could himſelf be put on ſhore, and the merchant inſtantly haſtened down to the landing-place, leading the little Indamora in his hand.—Charles ſat in the boat, ſupported by Rainsford;—as it ſtopped, he looked up, he beheld his child,—his ſtrength received a momentary renovation,—he ſprang forward,—he leaped on ſhore, while ſhe, overjoyed at ſeeing him again, almoſt flew to meet his embrace. He claſped her to his wounded breaſt with inexpreſſible ardour, exclaiming, "Now I die content; my laſt wiſh on earth is gratified, ſince I have ſeen thy angel face once more!" But this exertion could not laſt; his debility returned, he reached his houſe with difficulty, which he entered, ſaying, "Friendly

doors, once more receive me! I paſs you for the laſt time alive; all I have to wiſh is, that my few remaining days may be ſpent here in peace!"

The wiſh ſeemed not unreaſonable; but peace on earth was not to be his lot. He had not been many days at Calcutta, when Mr. Benington came to him, and aſked if he thought himſelf able to go through an interview with a dying woman, whoſe only anxiety was to ſee and make her peace with him ere ſhe ſhould breathe her laſt, by revealing ſecrets of the utmoſt importance, in which he was very nearly concerned. "This woman, Sir," ſaid the merchant, "is the wife of Winterton, once clerk in our houſe! I have forborne hitherto to trouble you with an account of his fraudulent practices, from an unwillingneſs to haraſs you with buſineſs till your health ſhould be reſtored; but this matter will not now admit of delay; I muſt therefore inform you, that within half a year after your departure, he and his wife diſappeared from Calcutta, taking with them a large ſum of money ſtolen from us; and, notwith-

notwithſtanding that I have made the moſt diligent ſearch, I never could trace out whither they were gone.

"But about half an hour ago, a ſervant of mine came to inform me, that he had accidentally diſcovered Winterton's wife in a ſituation of the moſt extreme wretchedneſs, and abſolutely dying through want, mentioning, at the ſame time, where I might ſee her. I went to her accordingly, and found her very ill, yet perfectly ſenſible; and as ſoon as ſhe ſaw me, ſhe eagerly enquired if you were returned to Calcutta, to which I anſwered in the affirmative. She then graſped my hand with agony, and entreated me to go and fetch you, for ſhe had things labouring in her mind which ſhe could reveal to no other perſon; nor could ſhe die eaſy with the conſciouſneſs that they would be buried with her. I told her that I would inform you of what ſhe ſaid, but that your own health was at preſent ſo indifferent, that I was uncertain whether you would be able to come out."

"God of heaven!" ſhe then exclaimed, "ill! —yet not dying, ſurely!—tell me not that"!

"I hope not," I replied, "but he is weak from the effect of a dangerous wound."

"A wound!—and how wounded!—yet ſtop not to tell me!—haſten to fetch him hither—I know his goodneſs, that he will come to me if he can!—Am I, then!"——

"She ſtopped here," continued the merchant, "apparently too much overpowered by the horrid ſecrets labouring in her boſom to be able to proceed."

Charles had heard enough,—the wiſh of a dying woman would have been alone ſufficient to carry him out, notwithſtanding his deſire of remaining quiet in the houſe; but when to that was added, the hope of hearing ſecrets which might elucidate the myſterious circumſtances that ſeemed to envelope his own fate and Amelia's, he forgot all elſe, and haſtened immediately to the dying Fanny, requeſting Rainsford and Mr. Benington to accompany him as witneſſes of what might paſs.

As they approached the door of the houſe whither they were deſtined, a perſon came out thence, who ſeemed to ſtart as if ſomewhat confuſed at ſeeing them; and though at firſt he

he appeared to be turning towards the way they were coming, yet (evidently actuated by the impulſe of the moment) he turned ſhort round, and walked away with a kind of hurried agitation.

"My God!" exclaimed Charles, whoſe attention had been attracted by this perſon's appearing to ſhun them, "who ſhould have thought of ſeeing that man here?"

"Who is he then?" aſked Rainsford.—"Do you know him?"

"But too well!" anſwered Charles; "'tis Dawkins I am ſure; I cannot be miſtaken in him. I am glad, however, to find that he is here, for then I am ſure he cannot"——— More he could not ſay, ideas ruſhed too faſt into his mind to permit their utterance, and in ſilence they reached the room where poor Fanny lay.

They approached her bed-ſide; ſhe was much worſe than when Mr. Benington had left her; her eyes were cloſed, and her ſenſes ſeemed nearly gone. The merchant addreſſed her: "Here is Mr. Meadows."

She opened her eyes, and fixed them earn-

eſtly on Charles; ſhe ſeemed to wiſh to ſpeak, her lips moved, but ſhe could not utter an articulate ſound. She held up her hands, as if to pray for forgiveneſs; and at length, after repeated efforts, with the utmoſt difficulty, pronounced the words, "Letter! Letter!" but was inſtantly ſeized with a convulſion, and expired.

Thus were fruſtrated, almoſt as ſoon as raiſed, the hopes which Charles had conceived of important diſcoveries. He proceeded, however, to examine a ſmall bundle, the ſole property which the deceaſed had with her; but not a ſcrap of paper, or document of any kind, was found, which could lead to farther conjecture of what ſhe might have had to communicate. He then enquired if any perſon had been with her in the interval between Mr. Benington's leaving her and his return, and was anſwered, only a clergyman who had come to pray by her. He aſked if any one was preſent during this ſolemn office, to which he was anſwered in the negative; that two perſons were in the room when the clergyman came in, but, deſirous of privacy, he begged them

them to retire; and having performed his ſacred function, he left the dying woman much more compoſed than before. A wide field for conjecture was here opened, but for vague conjecture only; — a poor ſubſtitute for the realities Charles had promiſed himſelf, and he returned home vexed, wearied, diſappointed.

A more pleaſing circumſtance, was the marriage of the younger Zelinda, whoſe mother died of the ſmall-pox a few days after Charles's return to India. Before her death, an Iriſh officer of the name of Yelverton had paid his addreſſes to her daughter, with her entire approbation; and as ſoon, therefore, as decency would permit, they were married, on which occaſion Charles behaved to her with his uſual liberality. To ſee her well ſettled was indeed a matter of no ſmall ſatisfaction to him, as he was relieved from any farther anxiety on her account, and had nothing left to attend to, but arranging his affairs with Mr. Benington, and providing ſuch guardians as might beſt ſupply the loſs of a father to his poor Indamora.

But while theſe things were yet floating in

embryo on his mind, a new bias was given to all his ideas, all his ſenſations, by the receipt of the following letter.

COULD my heart have remained inſenſible to the fatal ſcene which I ſo lately witneſſed, I ſhould indeed deſerve, my Charles, the harſh opinion implied in the few but frantic words which accompanied your more deſperate action. But I am not ſo altered from the Amelia who once occupied, nay who, I am now convinced, ſtill occupies, your whole heart. Yes, my long-loved friend, ſhall I dare to ſay, huſband! that countenance of guiltleſs deſpair, of which I had ſo tranſient a glance, has ſpoken more forcibly in your defence than all the laboured calumnies which have ſo long been induſtriouſly poured into my ears, could ſpeak to your injury. 'Tis that alone which has influenced the preſent alteration in my conduct, 'tis that which induces me, in my turn, to become the ſupplicant for an explanation to which I but ſo lately refuſed to hearken. Charles, tell me but that you ſtill love

love me, that you have not wilfully neglected me, that accident alone prevented our communication during the long interval of your abſence — aſſure me of theſe things, I muſt, I will believe you!

Why, it may be ſaid, did I refuſe to liſten to all this when it was ſo ardently preſſed upon me? Oh, my friend, however paradoxical it may appear, yet it is no leſs true, that it was my very partiality for you that dictated my conduct: You aſcribed it to a change in my affections; but it was becauſe I never felt thoſe affections more powerfully at any moment of my life, that I dared not truſt myſelf to ſee you. I thought that I was convinced of your unworthineſs paſt the poſſibility of a doubt, and that honour demanded the ſacrifice I had made; but how much inclination was at war with honour, you may judge by the ſtep I am now taking. I could liſten only to one ſide of the queſtion, becauſe I felt too ſtrongly how much I might be led by the potent bias of my heart, to give perhaps an undue preponderance to the arguments on the other ſide; and I became unjuſt from the very fear of being ſo. This

This confeſſion had not been thus long delayed, had I been perfect miſtreſs of my own actions; but, my Charles, ſince I dared to ſay a word in your defence, to urge the impoſſibility of an action like yours being prompted by any thing but ardent affections wounded paſt endurance, I have been watched, been guarded, as a lunatic to whom freedom was dangerous; and in order to obtain this communication, I am even obliged to have recourſe to ſecret arts, which my ſoul diſdains while compelled to practiſe them. My only wiſh, ſince the fatal hour when I laſt ſaw you, has been to come to a full explanation on thoſe ſubjects which occaſioned our eſtrangement, my only aim to obtain it; but when I hoped things were put into a train which might ſpeedily bring it about, I learnt, with a mortification which no words can deſcribe, that you were even then on your paſſage to India.

Charles, you know my heart! you ſee how much I have now put myſelf in your power! can I give a ſtronger proof of the truth of the wiſhes I expreſs? It certainly remains now in *your* breaſt to retaliate on *me* the ſeverity I have practiſed,

practiſed, and refuſe the explanation I ſeek; but if you are capable of acting thus, you are no longer the man I ſuppoſe, and juſtify my late rather than my preſent opinion. But away with ſuch an idea, I am perhaps culpable in having mentioned it, I have the fulleſt conviction that you will act honourably, and worthy of the pure paſſion which once formed the happineſs of our lives, and to which I hope and truſt we ſhall ſoon be reſtored.—Farewel! farewel, my Charles! and believe me, I can never experience a ſenſation of unalloyed delight, until I may be able to ſubſcribe myſelf, without a doubt remaining on my mind,

Your faithful and affectionate Wife,

AMELIA MEADOWS.

"And is it poſſible!" ſaid Charles, as he finiſhed reading this letter; "Does ſhe at laſt relent! And will ſhe ſuffer herſelf to be convinced that ſhe has wronged me! Oh, Rainsford, read, and ſee how bleſt I am! Now indeed

deed I ſhall quit the world contented and happy, or only unhappy becauſe I fear I ſhall leave Amelia in affliction."

"Oh, do not talk of quitting the world!—you have now a double tie to life ſince ſhe relents."

"No, Rainsford, the world and I have irrevocably bid farewel to each other! A few months ago, words ſo kind might have ſaved me, but 'tis now too late! Yet I die contented, ſince my memory will be cleared to her; and that, I truſt, my friend, you will take care ſhall be done."

Rainsford could not reply, his heart was too full; overcome with the mournful reflection, that when happineſs was juſt placed within his graſp, he was to be ſnatched away from it for ever! Charles went on, "Yes, my friend, for ſuch I may indeed call you, (oh, how few had ever an equal claim to that title!) I muſt aſk this one more favour at your hands, aſk you to vindicate my injured fame: Send her the fatal letter, the cauſe of all my woe; tell her all I know about it, a myſtery yet hangs over it, which time may perhaps diſcover; oh

what

what miſchief has it not done! Would that I could write the whole ſtory myſelf! but this trembling hand, — this confuſed head, — this wounded breaſt!" —— Alas, the agitation he received from the letter was too much for all theſe; he could proceed no farther, and a fainting fit enſued, which ſeemed at firſt to be the conſummation of his fate.

Yet it proved not ſo; he recovered after a while, as if unwilling now to ſubmit to a ſtroke which before he had not felt a wiſh to reſiſt. But it was the reſpite of a moment only; the ſcythe was ſtill poiſed in the extended arms of the inflexible tyrant, and he ſeemed only to delay taking the fatal ſweep, in order to ſport the longer with the feelings of the victim and his friends. Of this reſpite, however, Charles availed himſelf to ſettle his affairs and make his will, the particulars of which he occaſionally dictated to Rainsford in the intervals when he was beſt able to go through ſuch an exertion. One day, as they were thus employed, the little Indamora, who was ſcarcely leſs the darling of Rainsford than of her father, had been playing about the room, and amuſing them

them in various ways, when Charles on a ſudden, by an effort which ſeemed almoſt beyond his ſtrength, claſped her eagerly to his boſom, kiſſed her ardently, and then placing her on his knee, ſaid, "And what is to become of her when I am gone?" He pauſed; he looked firſt at Rainsford, then again at her; and at laſt ſaid, "Edward!"

It was enough for Rainsford; "yes," ſaid he, "I will be her father, I will ſhelter the harmleſs dove in my boſom, cheriſh her, love her."

"Friend indeed!" Again he kiſſed her, again he looked at her;—he put her down from his knee, he walked once or twice up and down the room, leaned on the back of the chair, fixed his eyes again on the child;—"but a mother, Edward?"

"Amelia."

"Do you think ſo?—I fear——"

"No, do not fear her."

"You think ſhe will undertake it?"

"Oh, moſt aſſuredly."

"But, Edward!—he made a long pauſe,—"England is—"

"A long

"A long way off!—I know it; but I will carry her thither as ſoon as I can get leave of abſence."

"Rainsford,—I can't thank you,—my heart——" and he walked to the window, while Rainsford hid his face in his handkerchief as he reſted it on the table.

Affecting as this ſcene was to Charles at the moment, it proved a great relief to his mind, that he had thus diſpoſed of his child. The idea, indeed, had been labouring in his mind from the moment of his receiving Amelia's letter, yet he hardly knew how to give it utterance; but this once arranged, all that remained for him to ſettle was ſoon done to his entire ſatisfaction, and his will depoſited in Rainsford's hands, whom he had appointed his executor with a legacy of five thouſand pounds. He bequeathed a thouſand pounds to each of his brothers and ſiſters, ſome other trifling legacies, and the remainder of his fortune, to the amount of about ſixty thouſand pounds, between Amelia and Indamora.

Thus was his pathway to the tomb ſmoothed over, yet he was ſtill viſibly going on in the

the track; all endeavours to heal his wound had proved ineffectual, and it daily made farther inroads on his health. He met the approaches of death however, with firmneſs, anxious more for Amelia than for himſelf, on whom he feared the tidings of his fate might make an impreſſion, dangerous perhaps to her reaſon, if not to her life, and only wiſhing to die in the arms of that friend who had ſupported him through ſo many conflicts, and whoſe attachment death itſelf, as he had promiſed him, ſhould not diſſolve.

But this friend was unexpectedly hurried away, while he yet lingered on the brink of the precipice. A ſudden order came from the Supreme Council of Bengal, for Rainsford to appear with all poſſible diſpatch before the Court of Directors of the India Company at London, in order to give evidence, and aſſiſt in inveſtigating a matter of very conſiderable importance to their intereſts. There was no poſſibility of delay, and however painful to the two friends to be ſeparated at ſuch a moment, it was unavoidable. Three days after the order came to Rainsford he embarked on board

board the Bengal packet, taking Indamora with him, at Charles's earneſt requeſt, together with his will, the important letter, and ſome jewels of conſiderable value, which made a part of the effects that were to devolve to his wife and daughter.

The parting ſcene was indeſcribably affecting, and the manner in which the dying man recommended his child to the care of his friend, the moſt ſolemn and impreſſive imaginable. Weak as he was, he would be carried to the water-ſide to ſee them embark, nor quitted it again till he beheld the ſhip under ſail, when, turning away his eyes, he exclaimed, "Thus uncertain is the fate of man! perhaps, while I remain to periſh here behind, the ocean may ſwallow them in her capacious womb!—and then—but who ſhall ſearch into futurity!"

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER VIII.

Love, that comes too late,
Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,
To the great sender turns a sour offence,
Crying, that is good that's gone: our rash faults
Make trivial price of serious things we have,
Not knowing them, until we know their grave.
Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
Destroy our friends, and after weep their dust.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE packet on board of which was Rainsford and Indamora, was overtaken by so violent a storm as it approached the Cape, that for many hours it seemed doubtful whether Charles's reflection on seeing them depart would not prove prophetic. But the appointed hour of the ship and her crew was not yet arrived,

arrived, and, after a ſevere ſtruggle, they at length weathered it, and the next day reached the Cape, but not without the ſhip's having ſuffered ſo ſeverely, that it was neceſſary to make a conſiderable ſtay there, ere ſhe could be refitted ſo as to venture to ſea again with ſafety.

During this interval, another veſſel from Calcutta arrived at the Cape, which had not left the former place till three weeks after the packet. Its captain was an acquaintance of Rainsford's, and expreſſed much ſurprize at his not being farther on his way to England, the cauſe of which the latter ſoon explained, and then of courſe enquired on his ſide, as the ſubject neareſt his heart, if the captain could give him any information relative to poor Meadows. To this he replied, as indeed was to be expected, that he died in about ten days after Rainsford's departure. Mr. Benington had perſuaded him to accompany him into the country, in expectation of his receiving benefit from the journey; "and benefit," added the captain, "he did perhaps receive, as the fatigue of the removal, probably

bably cut him off from ſome days longer lingering and ſuffering."

Rainsford, though ſo well prepared for this event, was deeply affected, nor could forbear revolving in his mind the ſad contraſt between Charles, the gay, the ardent, the animated creature whom he had firſt ſeen at Allahabad, and Charles the pale, the breathleſs, the inanimate corpſe, cut off ere he had fully reached the prime of life. He took Indamora in his arms, kiſſed her tenderly, and told her of her father's fate; ſhe wept at hearing it, wept at the idea that ſhe was to ſee him no more, but on her infant mind ſuch an impreſſion could not be laſting, and a ſhort interval eraſed it entirely, while Rainsford every day more and more lamented the loſs of a friend, whoſe ſociety had long formed the greateſt charm of his life. He had, beſides, ſcenes to go through on his arrival in England, which would only make him feel the loſs more bitterly, in the anguiſh he ſhould ſee it inflict on others.

But for theſe ſcenes it was neceſſary to prepare, and as he knew that important buſineſs awaited him in England, which would probably

bably prevent his ſeeing Amelia immediately, he wrote a letter, while he was yet on board the ſhip, to prepare her for the interview. This he diſpatched as ſoon as he reached London. It was as follows:

« WHAT ſhall I ſay, Madam? or how attempt to ſoften the melancholy ſtory which it falls to my lot to impart? Were I writing to a perſon endued with leſs fortitude than Mrs. Meadows, I ſhould dread the effect of what I have to unfold,—but ſhe knows that the world is full of calamity, and one of the moſt important duties of mortals is to ſtruggle againſt its preſſure. It is ſcarcely neceſſary, my dear Madam, after this preamble, to add, that you are deprived of a beloved huſband, at the very moment, when the voice of calumny being ſuppreſſed by that of truth, you entertained the reaſonable hope of enjoying in an union with him, the long and undiſturbed happineſs which your mutual conſtancy ſo well deſerved; while I am left to mourn the loſs of a friend whoſe generous heart and

amiable qualities firſt won my regard, and whom misfortune had ſince, from the power of ſympathy, rendered doubly dear.

Yes, Madam, Charles Meadows is indeed no more!—your letter found him almoſt expiring; nor could even the joy he derived from the proſpect of being reſtored to your good opinion, prolong his exiſtence, it could only render death leſs painful. Unable to contend againſt the accumulated ſufferings of a body lacerated by the hand of phrenzy, and a mind more deeply wounded by the arrows of diſappointed affection, he daily ſunk under them, from the time of his laſt fatal rencontre with you; and if he ſurvived that ſhock for ſome months, he was all the time like a dead man among the living.

Such was the untimely fate of one, who, under more propitious circumſtances, might have proved an ornament to the age and ſociety in which he lived. He had his faults it is true—perhaps great faults, but his heart was never depraved;—his were frailties not vices,—the wanderings of an ardent imagination too eaſily led aſtray, not the habitual corruption

ruption of a mind that ſets all morality at defiance.—Oh be thou then, deareſt Madam! "the recording angel to drop a tear over his failings, and blot them out for ever!"

Fain would I not wound you by dwelling farther on ſo painful a ſubject; yet, Mrs. Meadows, I cannot fulfil my duty to my friend without it. He has charged me with a requeſt for the due diſcharge of which I muſt deſire permiſſion to wait on you in perſon, when I will alſo conſign into your hands, the important letter on which he depends for his juſtification in his apparent neglect of you, and which, if not really your writing, he thinks you will allow counterfeits it with ſuch exactneſs, that it muſt even have deceived the penetration of a lover's eye.

I wait, Madam, but for the aſſurance that the interview I ſolicit will not be diſagreeable, and ſhall then haſten to Elſham, the firſt moment of leiſure which I can obtain from the important buſineſs which has called me over to England. Till then, Madam, I beg to be believed your faithful and devoted

EDWARD RAINSFORD."

Amelia read the letter without a ſigh, without a tear,—they were altogether inadequate to the expreſſion of her feelings. She roſe up, ſhe walked acroſs the room three or four times, then ſat down again, and exclaimed, "I am eaſy now! calamity has done its worſt! —it can have nothing more in ſtore for me!"

Mrs. Anneſley looked at her with aſtoniſhment;—nor ſhe, nor any one elſe, knew of the letter Amelia had written to her huſband; ſhe knew indeed that he had quitted the kingdom, never to return, (as was reported) and as ſhe ſaw Amelia gradually recover from the ſhock ſhe received at the Meeting, ſhe hoped the affair there was forgotten, and poor Meadows with it; but ſeeing her friend thus agitated, ſhe cried, "Good God, Amelia, what can affect you thus?"

Amelia only replied by putting the letter into Mrs. Anneſley's hands.—She began reading,—"Charles Meadows is no more!"—How little was ſhe prepared for intelligence ſo affecting—deſpair had put an end to his life ere he had numbered out half his days;—in that idea all his faults were buried, and tears burſt

burſt from her eyes, at the long train of tender and melancholy recollections, which this event called up in her mind.

But enough of ſuch ſcenes;—if too often repeated they loſe their intereſt,—paſs we on, therefore, to Mrs. Meadows's anſwer, which was full of expreſſions of the moſt poignant regret and remorſe for her own conduct, and lamentation for the loſs of her Charles; adding, that whatever his requeſt might be, it ſhould be ſacred to her, and inſtantly complied with, and entreating Rainsford to come and impart it as ſoon as poſſible.

Accordingly, the firſt day that he was at leiſure, he went down to Elſham, where his viſit was anxiouſly expected by the half-diſtracted widow of his friend. When his name was announced, ſhe turned her head eagerly to the door, and ſaw him enter, not alone, as ſhe expected, but carrying in his arms a child of about five years old, in whoſe features ſhe inſtantly recognized thoſe of the deceaſed Charles Meadows.

Rainsford ſat down, placing the child on his knee, and kiſſing her affectionately, while

ſhe looked about with aſtoniſhment, as if unable to comprehend the meaning of the ſcene, while Amelia ſurveyed her with looks of the moſt tender and melancholy emotion, as her features, her mourning garments, and the manner in which ſhe was introduced, told her ſtory in language too plain not to be immediately underſtood.

A ſilence of ſome minutes enſued, during which Rainsford was too much overpowered to give utterance to his feelings;—at length he began:—"Mrs. Meadows"—— But he could ſay no more; and notwithſtanding his efforts to repreſs them, tears burſt from his eyes. Poor Indamora, though ſhe underſtood not the cauſe of his diſtreſs, threw her little arms round his neck and joined her tears to his, while Mrs. Meadows ſat with her eyes fixed on them, unable either to ſpeak or unite in their expreſſions of ſorrow.

When this effuſion of ſenſibility ſubſided, Rainsford began again:—"Oh, Mrs. Meadows!—our friend!—he had faults to anſwer for!—this infant!—ſurely ſhe explains her own origin; you know to what I allude!

—Alas,

—Alas, his infidelity was no ſecret!—that her mother ſhould love"——"All that was perfect in man," exclaimed Amelia, was moſt natural; for how could ſhe know, and not love him!—Heaven bleſs this infant for his ſake!"—and ſhe roſe up in an extaſy of enthuſiaſm, and catching the child in her arms, kiſſed it with an extravagant burſt of affection, and taking it from Rainsford, ſet it upon her own knee.

The poor child at firſt ſeemed frightened; but Amelia ſoon recovering, kiſſed it more calmly, and ſoothed its little terrors; then turning to Rainsford, ſaid, "and this is the requeſt with which you were charged?"

"Even ſo, Madam; almoſt the laſt words that poor Charles ſaid at our parting were, "Plead for me, Edward, to my Amelia; pray her to transfer the tenderneſs ſhe once had for the father, to this innocent;—is it not a mark of my confidence in her generoſity, that I dare aſk her to protect the child of her rival, the offſpring of my infidelity?"

"Nor ſhall it appear that his confidence was miſplaced.—Yes, ſhe ſhall be my child;

and my life, which unfortunate circumſtances had rendered a burden, will become once more intereſting by having ſuch a charge on my hands.—You ſaw my poor Meadows then breathe his laſt?"

"No, Madam, I was, to my unſpeakable regret, conſtrained to leave him ere that mournful duty was paid: It is ſince my departure that I learned the fatal ſtroke was over."

"And are there then no hopes?—May you not have been misinformed?"

"Would to God that I could flatter myſelf ſo!—but it cannot be!—he can never be alive now!—it was only wonderful that I ſhould leave him ſo, but youth will ſometimes maintain a tedious ſtruggle."

"And gain at laſt a wonderful victory!—Why not ſo now?"

Oh, Mrs. Meadows, I were not your friend if I could flatter you with ſuch an idea!"

"Away with it then;—I will not ſuffer myſelf to indulge a fooliſh hope, only to renew my anguiſh with freſh diſappointments. I think, Mr. Rainsford, you mentioned having the letter in your poſſeſſion, which our

unhappy

unhappy friend ſuppoſed to have received from me, containing a prohibition of our correſponding?"

"I have, Madam."—He produced it immediately, and gave it into Mrs. Meadows's hand. She looked at it with aſtoniſhment;—though conſcious that ſhe had never written ſuch an one, ſhe could yet ſcarcely believe that it was not her writing, nor could forbear exclaiming, "Oh, God, how have we both been deceived! how could he doubt that this came from me!—And you have never been able to trace out its author?"

"Not certainly, Madam. I think, however, we know of one perſon who had at leaſt ſome concern in it, but ſhe is now no more;" and he proceeded to relate how Charles had been ſummoned to attend the death-bed of Fanny Warren, whoſe laſt moments appeared ſo haraſſed with ſome recollections relative to a letter.

"Good Heavens," cried Amelia, when ſhe heard the name of Fanny mentioned, "this is ſurely the very woman who uſed to be ſo much at my aunt's houſe, and who firſt

mentioned Winterton's being in England. I will enquire farther about this."

She now ſummoned her maid, and queſtioned her what ſhe knew with regard to Fanny. The maid perfectly recollected her coming ſo often to the houſe, and that ſhe was always particular in her enquiries about Miſs St. Aubyn and Mr. Meadows: She ſaid, moreover, that ſhe ſuddenly ceaſed her viſits without any of the ſervants knowing her reaſon, or what was become of her; but as they ſhortly after learned that ſhe was a woman of very infamous character, of which, till then, they had no idea, they ſuppoſed that ſhe had ſeen reaſon to ſuſpect her detection was not far off, and ſo had voluntarily diſappeared.

Thus the probability of Fanny's being concerned in the letter ſeemed eſtabliſhed; but what could have induced her to write it was ſtill totally incomprehenſible; and on the whole, the veil which enfolded this dark tranſaction, was in no material way withdrawn.

Rainsford having thus diſcharged his commiſſion, and not having time to ſpare for a long viſit, took his leave, with a promiſe of returning again as ſoon as it ſhould be in his power.

CHAPTER

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER IX.

Oh, all you Gods
Who govern this great world, and bring about
Things ſtrange and unexpected! Can it be?

SOUTHERN.

PRECISELY at the ſame ſpot where Rainsford had laſt ſeen his Anna, he beheld a carriage coming towards him, the driver of which, as well as a ſervant on horſeback who was attending, were in deep mourning. As he paſſed the chaiſe he looked in, and beheld—ye gods with what emotion!—Mrs. Mortimer herſelf in the dreſs of a widow. How!—was this poſſible?—Could ſhe really be releaſed from her engagement?—really be at liberty?—It muſt be ſo!—that dreſs could not be worn for any other reaſon. What ſhould he do? Should he follow the carriage and endeavour to ſpeak to her? But that was

gone on, and almoſt out of ſight, while he ſtood like a ſtatue, conſidering whether he might venture to ſtop it. Then he recollected that he had no time to loſe, as he muſt return with all poſſible diligence to London; but perhaps at Batterley he might learn ſomething about her.

When he arrived there, he addreſſed the hoſtler as he was getting the chaiſe ready:— "I met a carriage on the road with the ſervants in deep mourning; do you know whoſe it might be?"

"Why, pleaſe your honour, moſt likely it was Madam Mortimer's, for ſhe's often going to 'Squire Anneſley's."

"But why were the ſervants in mourning?"

"Law, your honour, why do'nt you know that 'Squire Mortimer's been dead theſe four or five months, or may be half a year?"

"So, then, Mrs. Mortimer is become a widow?"

"Ay, to be ſure, your honour; and folks ſay ſhe's left main rich."

"What, did Mr. Mortimer die ſuddenly?"

"Sudden

"Sudden enough for that matter; he fell back in his chair as he and Madam were ſitting together after dinner, and gave a kick, and it was all over."

"Why, he was very old, was he not?"

"Seventy-eight."

"And does Mrs. Mortimer take on much for his loſs?"

"She!—Lord help her; why, ſhe han't much reaſon, to my thinking, to take on about him; why, to be ſure, your honour moſt likely knows, that ſhe ben't now not more than five or ſix and twenty; and to be ſure, ſuch a fine young lady could'nt much like ſuch a fuſty old fellow as he; and folks ſay, that her father made her marry him for the ſake of his money, when, to be ſure, ſhe wanted to have a young gentleman about as old as ſhe, and the right on't too, to my thinking; for what ſignifies having money and being gentlefolks if ſo be they can't have thoſe they like; but I ſuppoſe, now, Madam will pleaſe herſelf."

"What, does the young man come a courting to her now?"

"No,

"No, for they tell me as he ben't now in England, but nigh hand Madam will take care as he ſhall know that ſhe may be had now for aſking for; and what if he is three or four thouſand miles off, if I an't worth coming for I an't worth having, as the ſaying is."

Here, the chaiſe being ready, the converſation broke off; Rainsford paid the hoſtler handſomely for his intelligence, got in, and proceeded towards London, meditating all the way on what he had heard, and in what way beſt to remind Anna of their former loves, and try whether ſhe were diſpoſed to renew them. Would it be beſt to write, or more reſpectful to wait on her in perſon? No, it muſt be a letter:—He knew not when he might be able to ſpare another day from London, and delay would not ſuit his impatience; beſides, it was dangerous.—But might not her ſentiments be changed? Could ſhe have preſerved ſo much conſtancy to her firſt attachment?—Why not? he had preſerved his, and why doubt her attachment being as firm as his own?—Would it not, however,

however, be indelicate to mention the ſubject yet to her?—Poh, nonſenſe, that was a ſilly form indeed,—and ſo let ſome other leſs diſtant and baſhful admirer ſtep in and carry away the prize. She could not be offended with his ardour; ſhe might, and with reaſon, be offended with his coldneſs.

Thus ably was the caſe argued on both ſides, and the reſult was, that as ſoon as he arrived in London, he ſat down and wrote to her. He began by tracing the origin and progreſs of their attachment; repreſented, in forcible and pathetic language, what he had ſuffered on hearing of her marriage; told her how, for a year after, he had followed her about, and had frequently ſeen her, unknown to herſelf, till at that time he left the kingdom; and concluded with ſaying, that he was juſt arrived in England, and had heard of her ſituation; that his heart was ſtill devoted to her, nor did he wiſh for any thing ſo ardently as to renew the connection which had been ſo cruelly broken off.

Reader, doſt thou think that Mrs. Mortimer ought to have been offended at receiving

ſuch

a letter, only half a year after the death of her huſband?—If thou doſt, thou certainly wilt be very indignant againſt her, for ſhe was not at all offended; on the contrary, we ſuſpect that few things could have been ſo grateful to her, as to find that a ſeparation of between eight and nine years, had not at all diminiſhed her lover's attachment.

She did not write him an anſwer therefore in an angry ſtrain, but, on the contrary, in a very kind one. She ſaid, that when the terms on which ſhe married Mr. Mortimer were ſo well-known, it would appear the moſt ridiculous affectation in her, to pretend great affliction for his loſs; at the ſame time, ſhe ſhould always acknowledge with gratitude, that he had made her all the atonement in his power for the manner in which they had come together, by ſhewing her the moſt uniform kindneſs, and by every indulgence which he could poſſibly procure her; and could ſhe have forgotten her *early* and *only* attachment, ſhe might have led a *comfortable*, nay even a *happy* life.

"But," ſhe added, "this is now at an end, I have endeavoured to diſcharge my duty to

one

one whoſe wife I was by compulſion, not inclination; and I am repaid by finding the man, who alone ever poſſeſſed my heart, reſtored to me ſtill conſtant, ſtill faithful; and being enabled to reward that fidelity not only with the poſſeſſion of its object, but at the ſame time with every bleſſing which fortune can beſtow. Come to me then, my Edward, as ſoon as more important concerns will permit, and be aſſured that you will receive yourſelf, a much warmer welcome than your letter."

After expreſſions of ſo much kindneſs, we may be aſſured that Rainsford was eager to find a moment of leiſure to fly to his miſtreſs; but this he could only accompliſh by going down one afternoon when the buſineſs of the day was over, ſpending the evening with her, and returning to London by a very early hour the next morning. In this interview it may be ſuppoſed, that a thouſand tender vows paſſed between them, that all which had occurred to either ſince their ſeparation, was related; and that, at laſt, they ſeparated on the beſt terms poſſible.

Ils se disent en peu de tems
Tous ce que l'amour nous fait dire,
Quand il est maitre de nos sens.

And indeed, before the gentleman entered his chaiſe on his return, an agreement had paſſed, that they ſhould be married as ſoon as the lady's year of mourning was at an end, the half of which was at that time within a week of expiring.

Rainsford was kept for ſome time in the terrible purgatory of being unable to ſee more of his Anna than by ſuch haſty viſits as his firſt; but at length the buſineſs, on account of which he came to England, was concluded; and through the indefatigable pains which he had taken to inveſtigate ſome very dark tranſactions, ſettled to the perfect ſatisfaction of the Company, although in its outſet, it had threatened them with a very different termination. To reward his ſervices, a colonel's commiſſion was immediately conferred on him, together with an appointment to a poſt of great importance at Calcutta, which had juſt become vacant.

From the acceptance of theſe, Rainsford would

would very gladly have excuſed himſelf; for as the motives which firſt induced his going to India ſubſiſted no longer, and his Anna's fortune, united to what he had acquired himſelf, was ſo ample, that no pecuniary attractions could remain in force to call him thither; as, moreover, the friend, whoſe ſociety had been the principal charm that India had ever afforded him, was gone, it would have been more accordant to his wiſhes to have ſpent the remainder of his life quietly in England. But he had entered into engagements with the Company while he was differently circumſtanced, from which he thought he could not now with honour recede, but muſt remain in their ſervice till the time of thoſe engagements was expired; and ſince he muſt therefore return to India, he could not heſitate about accepting honours conferred as the reward of decided merit.

But releaſed from public buſineſs in England, he had nothing left to attend to during the remainder of his ſtay, except his own private concerns, of which Mrs. Mortimer was, of courſe, the principal. He was not, however,

ver, ſo entirely abſorbed by her, as to neglect his little charge at Elſham, and her mother, (as Amelia always called herſelf) but accepted the Anneſleys' invitation to make their houſe his reſidence, by which means he could ſhew them every proper attention, while he was, at the ſame time, within diſtance of paying his daily devoirs to his beloved.

He had not been long at Elſham, before Amelia mentioned an idea which had ſtrongly ſuggeſted itſelf to her mind; that if they could go together into Shropſhire, they might poſſibly make diſcoveries which would tend to throw light on the ſtories circulated againſt Charles ſo ſoon after his quitting that country. "For," ſhe ſaid, "Mr. Rainsford, it would afford me a melancholy ſatisfaction could I do that juſtice to my poor Meadows's memory, which I was prevailed on to deny him during his life. —Oh that I had been left ſolely to the dictates of my own heart, and I think then my conduct would have been very different—but now, too late, that heart has to repent that it yielded to the influence of others, in giving credit to reports, the truth of which every

every action of his former life rendered abſolutely incredible. Yet calumny is ſo aſſiduous in diſſeminating its poiſons, that it is often a hard taſk indeed totally to deny them belief; and what had I to oppoſe againſt poſitive aſſertions, but what I might think probabilities, and which, though they might once have carried great weight, had certainly been rendered of much leſs force, from the temptations to vice into which he had been thrown."

Rainsford ſaid his *wiſhes* were ſtronger than his *hopes*, that the journey ſhe propoſed might have any good effect; but, however, he thought her quite right in the attempt, if there was but a bare poſſibility of any ſatisfaction reſulting from it, and he would gladly accompany her at any time ſhe might appoint, as it had always been his intention to go to Milſingtown before his departure from England: Their journey was accordingly fixed to take place in a few days.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER X.

Behold, my lords,
Although the print be little, the whole matter,
And copy of the father: eye, nose, lip,
The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek, his smile,
The very mould and frame of hand, nail, forehead.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Rainsford firſt arrived in England, he had written to Mr. Meadows to inform him of the melancholy fate of his beloved ſon, a ſtroke which almoſt broke the poor old father's heart. He had flattered himſelf when laſt they parted, that it was a temporary ſeparation only, at the end of which he ſhould have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing him return, to quit his native country no more; but when this golden hope was blaſted for ever,

ever, life appeared a blank, and he ſcarcely wiſhed its prolongation for another moment.

The idea of ſeeing Rainsford and Amelia was the firſt thing after this ſhock which ſeemed to give him any ſenſation of pleaſure, but he knew not till their arrival that he was alſo to ſee the child of his darling. The moment however that he caſt his eyes on Indamora, her ſtriking reſemblance to Charles telling at once who ſhe muſt be, he caught her in his arms, whence he hardly knew how to part with her again, and her ſmiles were the beſt cordial he had ever received for the wounds which the loſs of her father had made in his heart.

Not that he neglected the friend and wife of his ſon. Of the former he aſked a thouſand and a thouſand particulars relative to the dear deceaſed, nor for the firſt few days of his ſtay could talk on any other ſubject; and Rainsford was too indulgent to his feelings to deny him this melancholy ſatisfaction. Amelia ſoon commenced her propoſed enquiries, but could learn little more than ſhe knew already, and nothing which could lead

to

to a detection of the falſhoods (for ſuch ſhe was now convinced they were) circulated of her huſband, or of their authors. She found, indeed, that a ſecond revolution had taken place in the public opinion with regard to Charles, and that he was nearly reſtored to that univerſal eſteem in which he had been originally held; but his death alone ſeemed to have wrought this change; that only, and almoſt infallible, cordial to reſtore a wounded reputation.

In this revolution therefore there was nothing extraordinary; but ſhe was to behold another much more intereſting, and of which ſhe could have formed much leſs expectation. On her arrival at Milſingtown, Mr. Blandford immediately went thither to pay his reſpects to her, and requeſt that ſhe, with Colonel Rainsford and the whole party, would fix an early day for viſiting at Sherborne; an invitation which was accepted with pleaſure by all, and a day was accordingly appointed. Amelia had never been there ſince her quitting it on Mr. Blandford's death, although frequently preſſed both by Frederick and

Mrs.

Mrs. Blandford, to ſpend ſome time with them; but as ſhe always thought that there was more appearance than ſhe could wiſh, of the former's retaining ſome lurking remains of his attachment to her, ſhe could not ſatisfy herſelf but that there was an impropriety in going to ſtay at his houſe.

As they paſſed the church on their way to Sherborne, what emotions aroſe in her boſom at the recollection of the ſcene which had paſſed there ſo many years before, but which then ſeemed preſent to her mind, as though it had been but yeſterday! What a chain of events hung on that moment! Had it not been for that meeting, Charles's reſolution of ſeparating himſelf from her might never have been broken through, and their reſpective lives purſued courſes the moſt oppoſite poſſible to that in which they had now run;—from circumſtances ſo minute, do the moſt important conſequences often ariſe. Yet, could ſhe wiſh that they had not then met?—No, when ſhe queſtioned her heart, ſhe could truly ſay, that though ſhe had found their connection a ſource of many hours of the moſt poig-

nant miſery, yet it had alſo produced her ſome of the moſt exquiſite happineſs; and ſhe muſt always conſider it as reflecting honour on herſelf, that ſhe had been capable of inſpiring ſuch a man with ſo ardent and conſtant a paſſion.

Amidſt theſe, or like reflections, ſhe arrived at the houſe, where ſhe was forcibly ſtruck with the manner in which Frederick received the little Indamora; it was with an appearance of intereſt and remorſe, which ſhewed plainly that he could not conſider himſelf as wholly innocent of her father's fate, nor could reflect on it without feeling a portion of the general concern it had occaſioned.

They went out to walk about the grounds; —Amelia drew Rainsford apart from the reſt of the company, pointing out the ſpots of a thouſand intereſting occurrences, and relating a thouſand intereſting anecdotes, to which the Colonel liſtened with the moſt affectionate attention, often joining in the tears ſhe ſhed for the melancholy fate of a man to whom he had borne the ſteadieſt and moſt ardent friendſhip.

She walked with him to two old trees in the park, between which was fixed a ſwing, which, in the days of their childhood, had been a ſource of infinite delight to herſelf and her three companions. Here, in the holidays, would Frederick and Charles ſwing her and Juliana; and here, as if thoſe days were renewed, were two of the young Blandfords now ſwinging their gueſt Indamora. It was to her a very affecting ſight, but only a prelude to others yet more affecting.

As they proceeded on their walk they met with the horſe from which Mr. Blandford had fallen, and received his death's wound. His coat was ragged and ſhabby, as if from long diſuſe; yet Amelia knew him again immediately, and went towards him: but as ſhe approached, ſhe could not help ſhrinking back with horror. "And yet," ſhe ſaid, "wherefore fly thee, poor animal?—though thou art indeed the worſt enemy I ever had, I ought not to blame thee raſhly, thou mighteſt not be in fault, for thou wert ever gentle and tractable, nor know we how the fatal accident happened!"—Then turning to Rainsford,

whoſe arm ſhe had quitted on ſeeing the horſe, ſhe ſaid, "It was from this ——" She could not proceed; but Rainsford had heard enough—he knew the ſtory well, and ſaw her meaning, and he ſtood with his eyes penſively fixed on the affecting object. There was an uncommon degree of expreſſion in both their attitudes, which was not loſt on Frederick, as he came up, for he ſaw plainly what was paſſing in their minds; and taking hold of Mrs. Meadows's hand—"Alas, Amelia!" ſaid he—She ſtarted—to be addreſſed ſo familiarly by that voice, and in that place—oh, it recalled ſuch ideas to her mind!—and ſhe caſt on him a look of the moſt intereſting expreſſion.

To this he was not inſenſible, and proceeded—"What melancholy ideas are aſſociated with Roan? It is a long time ſince you ſaw him, I almoſt wonder that you recollected him." Then, turning to Rainsford,—"Shall I own my weakneſs, Colonel?" he ſaid,—"You perhaps know the melancholy tale attached to this animal;—my father reared him from a colt, he loved him, and I could not part with him;—but he threw my father, who

who died of the fall, and I could not bear he ſhould be uſed any more; ſo here he has lived in idleneſs, nor know I whether my love or averſion to him is ſtrongeſt. — Poor Roan!"

Amelia was aſtoniſhed; — ſhe never knew this circumſtance before; and it placed Blandford in a light quite new to her, ſince it ſhewed him to be poſſeſſed of a ſenſibility which ſhe had no idea his heart was capable of feeling. But ſhe was to be ſtill farther ſurprized.

As they quitted the horſe, Blandford had, almoſt inſenſibly to either of them, gotten Amelia's arm within his, and they walked on together, talking over events long paſſed, and moralizing on the inſtability of human affairs, till he had drawn her, without any apparent deſign to the ſteward's houſe at the park-gate. There he ſtopped and reſted with his arms on the pales of the garden; — "Mrs. Meadows," he ſaid, "you perhaps know that I have loſt my worthy old ſteward."

"I learnt it with concern. He was one of the firſt perſons I enquired after on coming to Milſingtown, and found he had been dead

ſome months. You muſt feel his loſs very ſeverely."

"I do indeed—an honeſter ſervant, or a worthier creature, in every reſpect, the world hardly contained."

"Oh God! he had a noble heart indeed!"—They both pauſed, for Amelia's attention was attracted from poor Horton, to a weeping willow, which grew by the ſide of a ſmall fiſh-pond within the garden, the boughs of which hung over the pales, while Frederick's attention was fixed on her.

After a few minutes ſilence,—"Is not that a fine tree, Mrs. Meadows?" he ſaid—"how luxuriant is its foliage—how its branches ſweep the waters below—how it ſeems to mourn that the hands which planted, as well as thoſe which cheriſhed it, are no more!"

Amelia ſighed—Frederick was ſilent again for a minute,—he ſeemed to wiſh to ſay more, yet hardly knew how to proceed—at length he ſaid, "Mrs. Meadows!"

She looked from the tree to him, then from him again to the tree;—"Ah," he ſaid, "I ſee you know the ſtory too well—you know

know this was not always *here*,—know too the ill-humour which occaſioned its removal."

"Too well I know it all; but let ſuch things be buried in oblivion."

"No, Amel—Mrs. Meadows—not quite; this tree muſt ſtand a laſting monument againſt me: I have made an agreement with my new ſteward that it ſhall never be cut down."

Amelia fixed her eyes upon him with perfect aſtoniſhment.—He took her hand!—"Ah, Amelia," he ſaid, "I fear I have been unjuſt.—Fear it?—Good God! I know it, I feel it;—we can ſee thoſe things when it is too late.—I was but too inſtrumental in the fall of him who planted that tree, and I now cheriſh it for his ſake.—But let me not diſtreſs you farther with ſo painful a ſubject!" Here the reſt of the company joined them, and the converſation took another turn: Amelia, however, failed not to mention this circumſtance when they returned to Milſingtown, where all united in rejoicing that a heart capable of ſo much ſenſibility, was at length reſtored to itſelf.

In fact, from the time of his emancipation from the thraldom, in which Dawkins had long held him, he had caſt off much of the pride, and many of the prejudices, which that deſpicable wretch had taught him to cheriſh; and now that Charles's melancholy fate ſeemed to have wiped away all his faults, his heart was altogether melted towards him, and he reflected, with the deepeſt ſelf-reproach, how much his own injuſtice had been a principal link in the great chain which led to it. Of courſe, when his mind was brought to this ſtate, he could dwell only on ſuch parts of Charles's character as brought him to his recollection in a pleaſing point of view; and if he was not convinced of the abſolute falſhood of all that had been ſaid to his diſadvantage, any doubts that remained in his mind were abſorbed in ſenſations of regret for the loſs, and affection for the memory, of one whom he had once loved as a brother, and who had always wiſhed to conſider him in that light.

As it was Mrs. Meadows's intention to ſpend

ſome time at Milſingtown, Rainsford, who could not be long at ſuch a diſtance from Mrs. Mortimer, left her there, after a ſtay of about ten days, and when ſhe was to return, went again for a few days to fetch her. By that time his half year of purgatory was nearly at an end, and he was counting the days that yet remained ere he was to be made happy. Theſe days at length expired; and he ſwore at the altar's foot, that the fidelity which he had ſo long preſerved to his Anna ſhould remain unſhaken to the end of his life, while Anna promiſed him equal fidelity.

Not many days after this event, he received a letter from Mr. Benington, informing him that a claim, of a very ſingular nature, on Charles Meadows's fortune, had been brought forwards by a perſon of the name of Weymar, an attorney at Calcutta, which would render Mrs. Meadows's preſence neceſſary in India, as heir to one half of her huſband's property, and guardian to his child, who was heir to the other. This letter gave Rainsford much concern, as he was apprehenſive that the voyage

might be extremely revolting to Mrs. Meadows's feelings, from the aſſociations which muſt be called up in her mind on the very theatre of Charles's ſufferings and death; but the neceſſity was imperious, and nothing remained to be done but to endeavour to reconcile her to it, to the beſt of his ability.

He was, however, agreeably diſappointed, when on mentioning it, he found that ſhe regarded the whole matter in the light in which he *wiſhed*, though he ſcarcely dared to *hope* it might ſtrike her, as a duty that could not be diſpenſed with, and which ſhe ſhould therefore perform without a moment's heſitation.—"Alas! Colonel Rainsford," ſhe ſaid, "that mind can be poſſeſſed of little real ſenſibility, and no energy at all, over which place can have any conſiderable influence! Believe me, I cannot be more feelingly alive to my unfortunate ſituation on the banks of the Ganges, than on thoſe of the Thames. To go a weeping pilgrimage to the tomb of a departed friend, or ſtudiouſly to avoid the ſpot where he lies interred, appear to me equally ridiculous

lous parade and affectation. If I ſtay in England, I can never loſe the remembrance of a huſband whom I adored, even when I moſt ſtrenuouſly refuſed to ſee him:—If I go to India, he can there be no more to me than he is here, an object of the deepeſt and moſt laſting regret. Perhaps there was a moment of my life which might ſeem to contradict theſe ſentiments; but that was a moment of enthuſiaſm, a romantic flight of youth, which Reaſon never attempted to juſtify; and with my preſent ſentiments, in ſimilar circumſtances, I ſhould not act in a ſimilar manner. I am but too well convinced that neither time nor place can have any influence in aggravating or alleviating the feelings of my loſs; and wherever duty to my dear charge ſhall call me, there, and there only, can my heart allow me to remain. My own intereſt might, perhaps, not be ſufficient to induce me to viſit a country, the manners and habits of which are ſo little congenial to my own; but when the intereſt of her to whom my heart, my life, are devoted, is con-

cerned, I ſhould be contemptible indeed, were I to allow myſelf an inſtant's heſitation."

Such being Amelia's ſentiments, it was immediately concluded, that ſhe ſhould accompany Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, whoſe time of departure for India was drawing very near.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XI.

Some strange reverse of Fate must sure attend
This vast profusion, this extravagance
Of Heaven to bless me thus! 'tis gold so pure,
It cannot bear the stamp without alloy.

DRYDEN.

TWO other perſons were now added to Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford's party; theſe were, Captain Stanley, a diſtant relation of the late Mr. Mortimer's, and Miſs Anneſley, the daughter of Mr. Anneſley by his firſt wife. The idea of the latter's going, was firſt ſuggeſted by Mrs. Rainsford; nor could the young lady have received a more acceptable propoſal. To viſit India had long been her moſt ardent wiſh, though it was a happineſs which ſhe ſcarcely ever dared to hope fate could have in ſtore for her; ſhe had pictured

pictured that country to herſelf as a paradiſe, and was almoſt ready to worſhip as a goddeſs, the perſon who threw open the gates, and invited her to enter it.

Cecilia had paſſed the early years of her life with Mr. Anneſley's mother, who was extravagantly fond of her, and had always indulged her to exceſs; yet, as ſhe was a woman whoſe mind had received a conſiderable degree of poliſh and cultivation, ſhe had paid great attention to theſe points in her granddaughter. Thus, when on her death, a few months after her ſon's ſecond marriage, Cecilia came to live with her father, he found her no way deficient in theſe reſpects; but he alſo perceived, what he could have wiſhed otherwiſe, that the exceſſive adoration ſhe had been accuſtomed to receive from her grand-mother, had created in her a reſtleſſneſs of temper, an impatience of controul, and an inceſſant craving for the attentions to which ſhe had been accuſtomed, which rendered her, conſequently, diſſatisfied with her ſituation under her paternal roof. She loved her father indeed, for he was one of the moſt affectionate of parents; nor could

could ſhe, or did ſhe, ever attempt to deny, that Mrs. Anneſley's behaviour to her was uniformly that of one of the beſt of mothers. Yet they had a riſing family, and ſhe could not be their ſole object of attention, neither could ſhe receive the ſame indulgence and adoration ſhe had formerly experienced; and though ſhe hated not her little brothers and ſiſters on that account, but endeavoured to ſhew them that kindneſs and affection which ſhe felt to be their due, ſhe always found in her heart that there was a ſomething ſtill unpoſſeſſed, and that ſomething of more value than all the bleſſings and comforts ſhe enjoyed.

But this degree of unhappineſs in her diſpoſition, the fatal conſequence of a miſtaken education, though it operated as an alloy to her making an entirely agreeable companion in her father's houſe, not being obvious beyond her domeſtic circle, had not the ſame effect with regard to the world at large, for which, even at an early period of life, ſhe poſſeſſed very great attractions. She had an uncommon flow of animal ſpirits, united with a

manner

manner and addreſs rarely to be met with in a very young perſon; and though ſometimes her ſpirits roſe to an overpowering exceſs, yet this was generally conſidered as not unnatural at her years, and what would be corrected as ſhe advanced in life.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer, from the time of the Anneſleys firſt ſettling at Elſham, were extremely pleaſed with her, and in a ſhort time grew ſo partial to her company, that ſhe often ſpent many months together at their houſe; a ſituation much better ſuited to her inclinations than her own home, ſince ſhe there became again the principal object of attention. Thus delighted and happy in herſelf, ſhe ſtrove on her ſide to be pleaſing; and if, ſometimes, little effuſions of the impatience of her temper broke out, Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer were always ready to overlook them, and conſider them as more than balanced by the engaging parts of her character.

Here ſhe became acquainted with Captain Stanley, who had previouſly ſpent many years in India, and it was from his deſcriptions that ſhe firſt imbibed ſuch charming ideas of that country.

country. Theſe were conſiderably augmented by Capt. Anneſley's letters, which more than confirmed, even enlarged, Stanley's accounts of the adoration paid to Engliſh women in the Eaſtern world, and who ſeveral times intimated a wiſh that his brother would ſend Cecilia thither, as ſhe could not fail to make her fortune with eclât. This being known to Mrs. Rainsford, united to her partiality for Cecilia, induced her propoſing that ſhe ſhould accompany herſelf and the colonel, when ſhe could be introduced in India in a manner peculiarly advantageous.

To this Mr. Anneſley yielded a half-pleaſed, half-reluctant aſſent. It was not a mode of ſettling his daughter very conformable to his wiſhes; yet it was ſo much her own deſire, and he felt ſo powerfully that the mode of life in India would be more conformable to her inclinations than that in England, that he could ſcarcely conſider himſelf as juſtified in raiſing any oppoſition to her going; eſpecially, as with Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford ſhe would be in a ſituation of real credit and reſpectability, not

be

be put up to market, after the uſual manner of young ladies in that country.

It was now that Ceçilia thought herſelf arrived at the ſummit of all earthly happineſs; and from the moment that this plan was arranged, no other idea could find a place in her thoughts, while ſhe was inceſſantly occupied with the preparations neceſſary for the voyage. Occaſionally, indeed, a tranſient ſenſation of regret would intervene, at being entirely ſeparated from parents whom ſhe had ſo much reaſon to love and revere, and ſhe was even tempted to accuſe herſelf of ingratitude at the tranſports ſhe felt,—but not to rejoice at going to India was impoſſible.

Yet ſhe departed not at laſt without ſome conflict. On the morning of their ſetting off for Portſmouth, where they were to join the fleet, ſhe packed up her few remaining cloaths before breakfaſt with her heart trilling with its accuſtomed raptures. Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford were to breakfaſt at Elſham, in order to take her up; they had been arrived a quarter of an hour before ſhe went down, which was ſpent in converſation with Mr. Anneſley, till his

his philoſophy was well nigh loſt in parental tenderneſs. Cecilia flew tranſported down ſtairs, but ſhe met her father at the bottom with tears in his eyes! Her feelings were awakened in an inſtant; — thoſe tears were at his ſeparation from her, while ſhe ungratefully rejoiced at leaving him; — her heart began to palpitate, each throb ſeemed a reproach, and ſhe paſſed on into the garden, whence ſhe returned not for ſome time, and even then had ſcarcely ſubdued the obſtinate tears by which it was apparent ſhe had been overcome. She ſtrove to be gay, but found, almoſt for the firſt time in her life, it was impoſſible; and at length, when ſhe heard the carriage come to the door, ſhe threw herſelf into her father's arms, and hiding her face in his boſom, had juſt power to ſob out, "I cannot leave you."

Mr. Anneſley, even leſs able to ſpeak than herſelf, embraced her affectionately for a few minutes; then ſeeing the company waiting, he roſe, locked her arm faſt in his, and led her to the carriage, where kiſſing her again, ſhe burſt from him, and throwing herſelf eagerly into it, fell back overpowered with a torrent of tears.

But

But theſe emotions were too violent to be laſting; ſhe ſobbed, ſhe wept for ſome time; ſhe twice begged to return back to her father; ſhe could not bear that ſeas ſhould ſeparate them! But the carriage went on, ſhe grew more calm by degrees, and ere they had proceeded half way on the journey, ſhe thought again of the voyage with her accuſtomed raptures.

Of a much more ſolemn and affecting kind was the parting between Mr. St. Aubyn and Mrs. Meadows, a few days after. As ſoon as the latter's voyage to India was ſettled, ſhe went down to Glendover, to announce it to her father and mother, and to ſee them previouſly to her departure. Charles's death had a like effect on Mr. St. Aubyn, as on many others, and operated as an expiatory ſacrifice for all his faults; ſo much more powerful, unfortunately, is the effect of feeling on mankind than that of reaſon. He no longer ſaw in him the guilty profligate, whoſe vices had rendered his daughter miſerable, and prevented her being ſettled more advantageouſly in life; he only now conſidered him as cut off in the vi-

gour

gour of youth, leaving that daughter a melancholy widow, too much attached to his memory ever to taſte happineſs again; while, at the ſame time, he accuſed himſelf as a principal cauſe of all, by the part he had taken in urging Amelia ſo ſtrongly to purſue the meaſures which had driven him to deſperation.

Under ſuch circumſtances, to be ſeparated from her without much proſpect, from his own advanced age, of their ever meeting again, was like ſeeing her carried to her grave. Reſolved, therefore, not to quit her till the laſt moment, he accompanied her to Portſmouth, where they were to meet the reſt of the party, and there remained till ſhe went on board the ſhip. Then praying her forgiveneſs for the ſhare he had taken in reducing her to her preſent ſituation, and bleſſing her and the child in a moſt ſolemn and emphatic manner, he turned away with a countenance of ſuch mingled ſorrow and ſelf-reproach, as could not fail to excite the tendereſt emotions of ſympathy in every one preſent.

The voyage paſſed off without any particular occurrence; for it can hardly be conſidered

dered as ſuch, that Captain Stanley, during that time, certainly conceived a conſiderable degree of partiality for Mrs. Meadows, and ſhe was much pleaſed with his company; but whether ſhe ever went farther muſt be reſerved for time to diſcloſe.

Cecilia ſoon loſt the ſmall impreſſions of regret with which the moment of ſeparation affected her. To a mind of ſtrong feelings, novelty always muſt have great charms; and the mere ſight of foreign countries is a rich ſource of gratification. All that Cecilia now ſaw was perfect novelty, and could not fail of intereſting her deeply: She had never been on the ſea before, ſo that even the mode of life on board a ſhip, as being new, was a matter of curioſity, and ſhe loſt its tedioufneſs in the pleaſure to be derived from the freſh ſource of obſervation preſented in the manners of thoſe eccentric mortals the ſailors; a deſcription of perſons totally different from all to which ſhe had hitherto been accuſtomed.

Nor did nature bear leſs marked features of the new and the wonderful, when on their arrival at Santa-Cruz, ſhe firſt beheld the famous

mous Peak of Teneriffe. To one who, till that time, had never ſeen higher eminences than the hillocks within a circle of forty or fifty miles round London; a mountain, three miles in height, was an object of equal aſtoniſhment and admiration; and ſo near as it appeared, it ſeemed ſcarcely credible, that it could be ſixty miles off, its computed diſtance from the port.

They viſited the convent;—they ſaw the miſerable nuns ſhut out from all intercourſe with the world, condemned to inceſſant faſting and prayer; which, though perhaps faſcinating for a while to youthful enthuſiaſm, yet muſt ultimately deviate into a loathſome ſatiety;—immured for life within the ſame dull, dreary walls, never to know the delights of ranging over the wide-extended globe, and gaining a comprehenſive knowledge of the varieties of nature and mankind,—in a ſituation calculated only to chill the heart and blunt the faculties:—They ſaw,—they pitied them ſincerely, nor wiſhed for any thing more ardently than to have contributed to their emancipation. Cecilia could even, like a

ſecond

ſecond Thais, have lighted the torch which ſhould ſet the horrid manſion on fire, and enlarge the priſoners, ſo much did her heart glow with indignation at beholding females thus degraded and oppreſſed.

On this ſubject ſhe dilated in a letter ſhe wrote from Santa-Cruz to her father and mother, and drew an animated compariſon between ſuch miſery and her own happineſs; to make which complete, ſhe ſaid, their company alone was wanting. She ſpoke highly of the kindneſs ſhe experienced from the whole party, particularly from Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, gave a lively deſcription of their ſea adventures, and ſome entertaining anecdotes of the honeſt tars, and concluded with ſaying, that ſhe anticipated ſtill greater delight on her arrival in the Land of Promiſe.

And at length ſhe reached that land. In the calm of a delicious evening, the ſhip turned the Reach of the Hoogly on which Calcutta ſtands, and that noble city burſt at once on the view, illumined by the glowing tints of the ſetting ſun. All previous feelings were cold to what Cecilia felt at that moment; it

was the day on which ſhe completed her ſeventeenth year; and this commencement of a new year in her life, ſeemed to her the commencement of a new exiſtence.

Colonel Rainsford was immediately inſtalled into the honours to which he had been appointed, and began enquiries for a houſe adequate to the rank in which they placed him, in which he muſt appear with that ſplendor attached to all poſts of importance in the Eaſt. He ſoon heard of a ſituation ſuited to his purpoſe; and as its owner was in haſte to leave it, the terms of purchaſe were ſpeedily accommodated, and he, with his lady and Miſs Anneſley, ſettled there within two months from their landing.

It was at a place called Eden, about five miles from Calcutta: Imagination could ſcarcely form to itſelf an idea of a more enchanting ſcene.—The houſe was juſt completed, and was large and commodious, furniſhed in a ſtile of true eaſtern magnificence, with every thing that could charm the ſenſes, or gratify the underſtanding; for a very fine library made part of the furniture. All in-

ventions that ſcience or fancy could ſuggeſt, were employed to counter-act the inconveniencies ariſing from the heat of the climate, and to make the bowers of the modern Eden as delightful as thoſe of the Eden of antiquity. In the garden was an elegant arcade, ſurrounded on three ſides by woods, which excluded the burning rays of the ſun, and open on the north to a lawn, interſperſed with clumps of ſhrubs and flowers, in the midſt of which was a very large baſon, with a fountain which threw up the water to an amazing height, and ſeemed to cool the atmoſphere around.

In this delicious ſpot its owner was accuſtomed to give the moſt ſplendid entertainments; and while his table was ſpread with the moſt expenſive dainties which that luxurious country could furniſh to gratify the palate, muſical inſtruments ſcattered in the ſurrounding groves, the notes of which were anſwered by reverberating echoes, afforded a no leſs voluptuous gratification to another ſenſe.

The houſe commanded a very fine view of

the ſurrounding country for many miles. Its principal feature was the fine river Hoogly, on which veſſels of all ſizes and denominations were continually paſſing and re-paſſing, and whoſe borders were a continued ſcene of woods, lawns, and gardens, while the country beyond was occupied by villages and corn-fields, ſcattered over with moſques, and other remains of Mahometan architecture. Theſe were animated by numberleſs elephants, buffaloes, camels, and cattle of all kinds, perpetually moving backwards and forwards, either ſubmiſſively guided by their mighty maſters, or roving free as air, and frolickſome as ſpring. From another part of the houſe was a noble proſpect of the city and port of Calcutta, emboſoming innumerable maſts of ſhips, with their ſtreamers ſporting wantonly to the wind, while, the other way, the eye juſt caught a diſtant glimpſe of the boundleſs ocean, ſtretching from thoſe torrid climes to the frozen regions of the Antarctic Pole.

Amid ſuch ſcenery, how ſublime, how beautiful was it to contemplate the effect of the lightning, which is ſo conſtant in that hot

country, that ſcarcely an evening paſſes without it, and which is ſo finely deſcribed by the pen of a female voyager to India.—"But what I always behold," ſhe ſays, "with the greateſt reverence and awe, and at the ſame time with pleaſure, is the lightning. It is not that offenſive glare of light which I have been uſed to ſee, but a beautiful fire which plays amongſt the clouds, and paſſes from one part of the heavens to another, in every direction, and in every variety of vibration."

To this paradiſe, Colonel and Mrs. Rainſford earneſtly wiſhed and entreated Amelia to accompany them; but as theirs muſt, in conſequence of the Colonel's ſituation, be a very public life, ſhe knew it would ill accord with her ſentiments, and ſhe therefore preferred remaining at Calcutta.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XII.

O Djeüx dont le pouvoir sur les chôses preside,
Quel èſt cette avanture, et qu'en puis-je augurer!

TO advert now to Mrs. Meadows's affairs. — The following were the particulars ſhe learned from Mr. Benington, on which the claim upon her deceaſed huſband's property was founded:

"It was but two days after Mr. Rainsford's departure, Madam," ſaid he, "that a Hindoo ſervant of mine, who had been abſent for ſome time, returned home, when obſerving the melancholy ſtate of poor Mr. Meadows's health, he told me that he had ſeen a perſon, during his abſence, who had performed many wonderful cures, even on thoſe who were ap-

parently at the laſt extremity, and he earneſtly wiſhed that our friend would conſent to be put under his care. This was a derviſe who lived a conſiderable way up the Ganges, who, by his prayers, his auſterities, and perfect holineſs of life, had gained ſo much favour with Brahma, that the great Being had vouchſafed, in token of their acceptation, to endow an herb, which the holy man cultivated in his garden, with wonderful healing power, thus enabling him to become eminently uſeful to his fellow-creatures. My ſervant added, that Jeipal, (ſo was the derviſe called) was at that time at Chinſura, whither he had been ſent for to the daughter of the governor, and Mr. Meadows might be conveyed thither by water, without any inconvenience.

I thought this worth attention, and mentioned it to Mr. Meadows, offering to accompany him if he would undertake the voyage. To this he was at firſt very reluctant, and entreated to be permitted to remain quiet for his few remaining days, nor be haraſſed with a removal, which he was firmly perſuaded could

could be attended with no good effect. But at length Ooſhawn, (my honeſt Hindoo) joined his entreaties to mine with ſo much artleſs ſimplicity, and yet with ſuch perfect confidence in the efficacy of what he propoſed, that Mr. Meadows made no farther reſiſtance, and we ſet out for Chinſura the following day.

Ooſhawn immediately ſought the holy man, whom he found in a cave, juſt out of the town, whither he always retired when the buſineſs of the day was over, as he could not bear to live amid the ſmoke of houſes, longer than was abſolutely neceſſary. The proper applications were immediately made, and in a few days many favourable ſymptoms began to appear, which ſufficiently encouraged our friend to perſevere in following his new phyſician's preſcriptions, while, at the ſame time, he was charmed with the ſimplicity and unfeigned benevolence of his character.

I was only able to continue a fortnight at Chinſura; but in that time Mr. Meadows was ſo viſibly amended, that I could leave him without anxiety, eſpecially as he aſſured me that he was himſelf quite eaſy and ſatisfied,

and rejoiced that he had yielded at laſt to the perſuaſions of myſelf and Ooſhawn. This latter I left with him, and proceeded to Allahabad, where I was detained four months on buſineſs; but to my very great ſurpriſe, during that whole time, I never heard of Mr. Meadows: The real cauſe of his ſilence, however, never once occurred to me, for I left him in ſuch an amended ſtate, that I entertained not the ſmalleſt doubt, when we ſhould meet again, of finding his health nearly reſtored. Judge then with what unſpeakable concern I heard, when I arrived at Chinſura, in my return, that he died there but a few days after my departure! I enquired particulars of his death, but could learn none, nor where or how he was buried; but it was believed that the derviſe conſigned the body to the Ganges. Jeipal, however, had quitted the place immediately on Mr. Meadows's death, as had alſo my ſervant Ooſhawn, who, it was believed, was gone back to Calcutta.

I was deeply afflicted indeed at this ſtroke, and the more as my young friend's fate ſeemed enveloped in a kind of myſtery, which led me

to

to fear that all was not right, and to blame myſelf exceedingly for having left him; though indeed, ſo urgent was my buſineſs, that I could not have remained at Chinſura without the extremeſt inconvenience;—my only hope was, that all would be cleared up by Ooſhawn.

But when I reached Calcutta, Ooſhawn was not there, nor had been heard of ſince we departed together, while I was ſaluted with quite a different ſtory relative to the death of my poor friend. Weymar was juſt then arrived with a bond for ten thouſand pounds, purporting to have been given him by Mr. Meadows for important ſervices rendered him, though what thoſe were, was in no way ſpecified. The bond, moreover, was dated a fortnight after I left Calcutta; whereas, at Chinſura, I was informed that Mr. Meadows ſurvived my departure but a few days; yet, at the ſame time, the ſignature ſeemed ſo indiſputably my friend's hand-writing, that I could ſcarcely doubt its validity, eſpecially as Weymar gave a clear and conſiſtent account of the motives which had actuated Mr. Meadows in beſtowing on him ſo profuſe a reward.

He ſaid, that he was walking about the outſkirts of Chinſura three days previouſly to the date of the bond, when, by accident, he eſpied a man lying in a cave, apparently almoſt dying. On approaching him, he found it to be Mr. Meadows, of whom he had a ſlight knowledge, from having been once employed by him in ſome law buſineſs; and ſurpriſed at ſeeing him in ſuch a ſituation, he enquired what had brought him into it, offering him aſſiſtance, of which he obſerved he ſeemed to ſtand much in need.

An urgent requeſt from Mr. Meadows to get him conveyed back to Chinſura, was the reply to this offer, as, he ſaid, he had been enticed thither by the derviſe, under pretence of the air of the town retarding his recovery; but, in reality, that the bigotted votary of Brahma might get him into a ſecluſion where he could the more readily weary him with importunities to embrace the Hindoo faith. Weymar, on this, conveyed him back to the town, and attended upon him to the time of his death, in gratitude for which, Mr. Meadows

dows had, unſolicited, given him the bond in queſtion.

"This ſtory," continued the merchant, "appeared to me not wholly incredible, and in ſome ſort accounted for the little ſatisfaction I could gain when I made my enquiries at Chinſura; and what I heard there ſeemed ſtill farther elucidated, when, on demanding of Weymar how he had diſpoſed of the body, he ſaid it was ſunk in the midſt of the Ganges, according to the ſtrict injunction of the deceaſed. Yet, notwithſtanding this, Madam," ſaid Benington, "the attorney's claim appeared of ſo extraordinary a nature, that I thought it beſt to aſk advice of counſel how to proceed, who were decidedly of opinion that the bond ſhould be conteſted, unleſs you ſhould chooſe rather to yield to it at once, than to undertake a voyage in the hope of defending your property."

Such was Mr. Benington's relation, which all preſent acknowledged to involve one of the moſt extraordinary tranſactions they ever heard, nor could they believe that, even under ſuch circumſtances, Charles would voluntarily la-

viſh away ſo large a ſum, for ſervices, which a very ſmall part would certainly have amply repaid.

Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford left Amelia deeply involved in the inveſtigation of this troubleſome affair, when they went to take poſſeſſion of their new purchaſe. The raptures which Cecilia had experienced during her voyage had been increaſed ten-fold ſince her arrival in India. Charming as that country was pictured in her imagination, ſhe yet found the reality more delightful than the painting, and thought the days too ſhort to ſee all ſhe wiſhed, and expreſs all the delight ſhe felt.

But the moment of the moſt ſuperlative happineſs which life could afford, was ſtill to come: ſhe had as yet made no public appearance; that was reſerved for an entertainment which the Colonel was to give on his removal to Eden, to celebrate at once the taking poſſeſſion of his office and his houſe; and as both he and Mrs. Rainsford united elegant taſte with great generoſity, this was to be one of the moſt ſplendid ever ſeen on a ſimilar occaſion.

To

To this day of feſtivity Cecilia looked forward with the moſt anxious expectation, nor was ſhe diſappointed on its arrival; ſhe was enchanted by every thing ſhe ſaw, and in her turn enchanted all who beheld her. She certainly had beauty, but not by any means approaching to perfection, nor would her features, like thoſe of Mrs. Meadows, ſtand the teſt of minute examination; yet ſhe had attractions, which to the generality of mankind are even ſuperior to beauty, in that eaſy elegant vivacity already hinted, and which is very rarely to be met with in a young woman on her firſt entrance into the world, ſince it is, generally ſpeaking, only to be attained by a conſiderable intercourſe with that world, which it then contributes ſo much to charm and enliven.

Every circumſtance in this memorable evening contributed moreover to elevate Cecilia's animation, even far above its uſual level. Its being her firſt appearance in particular, when all ſhe ſaw was recommended by novelty, and conſequently appeared with a double intereſt; and ſhe herſelf, being a novelty to others, would

would of courſe, wherever ſhe had been, have attracted conſiderable attention. How much more then in India, where a young and captivating Engliſh woman is an object almoſt of adoration? Indeed the devotion paid her was ſo unbounded, that her imagination was intoxicated, till ſhe could even have fancied herſelf a princeſs in one of thoſe fairy palaces, with the deſcriptions of which ſhe had ſo often been faſcinated. Thus ſhe paſſed the day, charming and charmed, and when it was over, and the company diſperſed, ſhe ſighed to think how fleeting were ſuch pleaſures, and longed impatiently for their repetition.

Her impatience remained not long ungratified. Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford had gained ſo much popularity by their *debut*, that all their gueſts, emulous to vie with their magnificence, made like entertainments for them in return, and thus a round of exceſſive gaiety occupied them for ſeveral weeks in uninterrupted ſucceſſion. From ſome of this diſſipation they would gladly have excuſed themſelves, *much* on their own account, *more* on that of their young charge, whoſe danger from

it

it was but too obvious. But to refuſe parties made on purpoſe for them was impoſſible, and it was equally ſo to keep her, who was become the object of univerſal and unbounded admiration from them; and thus no reſource was left, but in the hope that this career once run, they ſhould be able to retire into a ſomewhat more quiet way of life, when her mind might ſettle into a calm.

Captain and Mrs. Yelverton, (the latter of whom the reader will recollect to have been the younger Zelinda) were, of courſe, on a footing of intimacy with Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, from the firſt of their arrival. The Colonel had, from his former ſituation, a conſiderable ſhare, in conjunction with Charles Meadows, in Mrs. Yelverton's education, who profited ſo much by the attention they paid her, that ſhe was become a very accompliſhed woman, though retaining all her native artleſſneſs and ſimplicity. She was indeed a happy mixture of the Aſiatic and European, and her mild and ſweet temper proved an admirable emollient to the warmth of her huſband's, who had a great deal of the true Iriſh-

man

man in his compoſition. Yet, at the ſame time, as he wiſhed to attain, and had very much ſtudied, the manners of a gentleman, he ſeldom ſuffered this warmth to get the better of him ſo far, as to make him trangreſs the bounds of decorum; and when it did, if once convinced he was in fault, no man was more ready to own and apologize for his intemperance. On the whole, therefore, theſe were eſteemed pleaſant and deſirable companions by Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, and were ſtill more admired by Cecilia, who being nearly of the ſame age with Mrs. Yelverton, they ſoon commenced the cloſeſt intimacy.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XIII.

Though long years were thine,
Yet never more would life re-animate
This murdered man: murdered by thee!

SOUTHEY.

MEANTIME Mrs. Meadows's ſituation grew every day more and more embarraſſing. A few days after Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford left her, ſhe was ſurpriſed by ſeeing the figure of the Reverend Mr. Dawkins enter her room! She did not know that he was ſtill in that part of the world,—not a word had ſhe ever heard about him ſince he left England, and ſhe hoped ſhe was rid of him, and his importunate attentions, for ever. But he was again before her eyes, and ſhe involuntarily ſhuddered at his entrance.

He

He addreſſed her with hyprocritical expreſſions of concern for the death of her huſband, whom, he declared, he believed to have been an innocent and injured man, with the ſingle exception of his intercourſe with Indamora. On the mention of her, he launched out into a ſtring of high-flown compliments on the candour and goodneſs of heart Amelia had ſhewn, in taking the child of her huſband's infidelity into her protection; adding, that it was on that candour and goodneſs he muſt rely for her pardoning his intruſion, to which he was ſtimulated by an anxious deſire to hear of her health, and that of all his good friends in England. He then proceeded, in the ſame canting ſtrain, to make a thouſand enquiries about the Anneſley's, the Blandford's, Mr. and Mrs. St. Aubyn, and numberleſs other perſons, for whoſe welfare he experienced much the ſame anxiety as Satan, to admire the works of creation, when he ſought to learn of Uriel the way to earth. But, more particularly, he enquired after old Mr. Meadows, whom, he ſaid, he very greatly apprehended, might be quite broken down with grief at the death

death of his darling child;—and, in ſhort, talked about Charles, his concerns, and his connections, as if they gave him the moſt tender and lively intereſt.

To all theſe queſtions Mrs. Meadows made only plain and conciſe anſwers, carefully avoiding to enter into converſation in ſuch a manner as might appear to give him the leaſt encouragement, or leave him room to ſuppoſe that ſhe was pleaſed with his viſit, and wiſhed for its repetition. But Dawkins was not to be daunted. The paſſion which he had always felt for the poſſeſſion of Amelia's beauty, was no way diminiſhed by the length of time he had ſpent in his fruitleſs purſuit; and as ſhe was now become a widow, and, what was ſtill more, a *rich* widow, he was determined to renew that purſuit with more ardour than ever. Nothing diſmayed, therefore, by her coldneſs, he extended his viſit to a conſiderable length, and at his departure ſignified, that as he ſhould now probably continue at Calcutta for ſome time, it was his intention to take the liberty of paying his reſpects to her

her occaſionally;—an intention for which ſhe felt by no means grateful.

It was not very obvious to the world, what had been the occupation of Mr. Dawkins ſince his arrival in India. At his firſt coming over, he had ſpent near four months at Calcutta, and had made ſome attempts to obtain eccleſiaſtical promotion there; but all proving unſucceſsful, he went up the country, and did not return again to Calcutta till about the time of Fanny Warren's death, when he was ſeen there ſo unexpectedly by Charles. Still he did not appear to have any ſettled employment, or plan of living; ſometimes he would ſtay at Calcutta for ſeveral weeks, then again he was abſent for ſome time, and was ſcarcely known to aſſociate with or to be noticed by any one. Having now, however, an object in view, in this renewed purſuit of Amelia, it ſeemed probable that he would remain ſtationary in the city, till his fate, with regard to her, ſhould be decided.

But Amelia, on her part, was determined to keep him at as great a diſtance as poſſible, without abſolutely forbiding his viſits, which was

was a ſtrong meaſure to take unleſs for ſome important reaſon; and ſhe thought alſo, that it would be giving him a kind of conſequence, with regard to her, which ſhe wiſhed extremely to avoid: ſhe ordered herſelf, therefore, to be denied to him when he ſhould call; but, notwithſtanding this, he found means, by ſome trifling pretence or other, frequently to gain admittance.

In one of theſe viſits, he led the converſation, inſenſibly, to the odd circumſtances attending Weymar's bond; and at length, after dropping ſeveral hints that he ſuſpected ſome deep-laid fraud with regard to it, (which ſhe would not attend to, on account of the perſon from whom they came) he at laſt went plainly to the point, and addreſſed her: "Mrs. Meadows, you muſt be thoroughly convinced that I have long borne you the moſt ſincere and ardent paſſion. I know very well, that till lately there has been an inſurmountable obſtacle, on your part, to the gratification of my wiſhes; heaven knows, that I regret the removal of that obſtacle as ſincerely as yourſelf: for ardently as I love you, I could have given up

up my own happineſs with content, nay, with tranſport, to have ſeen you bleſſed as your conſtancy deſerved. But the paſt cannot be recalled, nor the decrees of fate reſiſted; heaven has been pleaſed to take this poor young man to himſelf, and repay him by an early removal to a ſtate of bliſs, for the injuries and calumnies he had ſuffered in this world. And now, though I could reſiſt my paſſion ſo far as to impoſe ſilence on my tongue, while your union with another forbade me to hope, yet think not, charming Amelia, ardent as that paſſion is, it can ſubmit any longer to pine in ſecret: No, I muſt tell you of it; I muſt ſigh out my ſoul at your feet, entreat you to allow me to hope for the reward which I ſurely deſerve; my heart, my life, is devoted to you; tell me then that you will one day be mine!"

Amelia liſtened to him, not with aſtoniſhment, for this was what ſhe dreaded, but with a horror and averſion, which rendered her unable to interrupt his harangue, and which ſhe ſcarcely attempted to diſguiſe in her anſwer. "Mr. Dawkins," ſhe ſaid, "from a perſon unacquainted

unacquainted with me, and my ſituation, I might have *pardoned* ſuch a declaration;—from you, who know them ſo well, I conſider it as abſolutely *unpardonable*. Can it be ſuppoſed, that a few ſhort months has ſo effaced the attachment I bore to my deceaſed huſband, that I can endure to liſten to the addreſſes of another? No, Sir, my affections, my happineſs, lie buried in the ſame earth which encloſes his body: To his child my days are devoted; and by unwearied care of and attention to her, I hope, in ſome meaſure, to atone for the wrongs which her devoted father experienced from my hands. Away, then, nor dare approach me more with ſuch language; for if, at any time, ſuch ſhall paſs your lips again, you are baniſhed from my ſight for ever."

"O, Inſolence of Beauty! and is it thus that a paſſion like mine is to be treated? But hear me, Madam; I am not to be repulſed by a few high-ſounding words; I am reſolved to poſſeſs the treaſure I ſeek, at all hazards; it is the pearl of great price, to gain which I will ſtake not my body only, but my ſoul itſelf. I would

would owe my felicity to your own free will, would obtain my ends by fair and gentle means; but if your pride can ſcorn entreaties, know that I have you in my power, you and this child too. A word from me can releaſe you in a moment from this bond which threatens your property, or a word from me can raiſe up againſt you a claim of ten times its magnitude,—a claim which will overwhelm both yourſelf and your infant in tremendous ruin. Conſent then to comply with my wiſhes, without delay, or dread the vengeance of one, who, though he loves almoſt to diſtraction, can ſhake off this womaniſh weakneſs, and ſhew you, when too late, the danger of defying a paſſion which knows no bounds."

"Baſe, groveling ſoul! and is this the way in which you hope to frighten me into compliance? Know, Sir, that a female form may encloſe a heart firm and reſolute as your own. Do you think, when I could arm myſelf with ſufficient reſolution to reject a man, on whom at that moment I doated, becauſe I thought him unworthy of my love, that I am to be terrified into yielding to the paſſion of one

whom

whom I now deteſt and deſpiſe? If I am indeed, as you ſay, in your power, deprive me of my property, deprive my artleſs innocent too of her's, it will make no impreſſion on me; enjoy, if you can, ſuch ill-gotten wealth: poor, but with a conſcience which cannot reproach me, I will work for our mutual ſupport, nor envy you your riches with the feelings that will accompany them."

Dawkins, half intimidated by the firm and dignified manner in which ſhe ſpoke, at firſt heſitated in his purpoſe; but ſoon rallying his ſpirits, he began again: "Theſe are fine high ſounding phraſes, Madam, but I know the female ſex too well to be thus fooled! You think, by this ſeeming reſolution, to frighten me from, and make me drop my purſuit; but know, Madam, that if your heart be, as you boaſt, formed of adamant, mine is not compoſed of *ſolvable* materials. I would treat you with kindneſs, if you would permit me; would teach you that ſorrowing and lamentation can never recall to life the man whom *you* have murdered! and enforce on your remembrance, that the ſpirit, now ſoaring aloft, never more

will return to its frail manſion of clay. I would lull your anguiſh to reſt, on the boſom of affection; would ſhew you the difference between the flighty volatile paſſion of a ſtripling and the ſteady uniform attachment of riper years: But if your ſoul is ſteeled againſt ſuch impreſſions, I muſt have recourſe to methods leſs gentle; for by all the powers of Heaven I ſwear, that I will accompliſh my purpoſe! Once more, then, I offer you both the ſword and the olive-branch; chooſe between them, it is the laſt moment that *choice* is in your power! Accept the olive-branch, and years of happineſs await you; reject it, and you cannot foreſee the extent of the ruin ready to fall on and cruſh you!"

"And let it fall!—I blame myſelf for having liſtened to you ſo long;—be gone, this moment, nor ever dare attempt to come within my doors again."

"I go, Madam, nor ſhall ever enter *your* doors again, for they will not much longer be yours to enter!" He then quitted the houſe, leaving Amelia loſt in aſtoniſhment, and ſcarcely knowing whether to truſt to her ſenſes.

She

She ſent immediately for Mr. Benington, to whom ſhe related all that had paſſed, aſking his advice what was to be done in ſo ſtrange and perplexing an affair, and enquiring if he, who knew more of Charles's concerns than any other perſon, could gueſs the meaning of Dawkins's threats. He could not throw any light whatever on the matter, he knew not of any connection that had ever ſubſiſted between them, and ſuggeſted that the whole might be only a contrivance of Dawkins's to frighten her; and as he could not accompliſh that, he might very probably trouble her no more.

Such alſo was Colonel Rainsford's opinion when he heard this ſtory; as, he ſaid, he thought he could ſpeak with confidence, that no kind of intercourſe had ever paſſed between his friend and the wretch in queſtion, and he did not therefore ſee how it was poſſible, that what he threatened ſhould be in his power. He thought, however, that in ſuch circumſtances, it was much better for Mrs. Meadows to go for a while to Eden, than to remain at Calcutta, expoſed to interruptions from ſuch a man, who no doubt would al-

ways find means to force himself into her company. She accordingly consented to go thither, till she could see what turn her affairs were likely to take.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER X.

E in tal modo comparte i detti sui
E'l guardo lusinghiero, e'l dolce riso
Ch' alcun non è che non invidi altrui
Ne il timor da la speme è'n lor diviso.

TASSO.

MRS. Meadows would not, perhaps, have yielded to the preſſing invitation of her friends, had they not by that time ſubſided into a more quiet way of life, their grand round of feſtivity being nearly over. Not that their ſtation would permit their living in ſo domeſtic a manner as their wiſhes might have prompted, but they determined that it ſhould be as much ſo as was in their power; and this, not merely to gratify their own inclinations, but equally out of regard to Miſs

Anneſley, on whom they ſaw, with the deepeſt concern, the ſcenes in which ſhe had been engaged, had made impreſſions which they wiſhed to be effaced again as ſoon as poſſible. But this, alas, they found, was not eaſily to be done; and a ſhort experience convinced them that a youthful mind once tarniſhed, is not eaſily reſtored to its original purity.

Cecilia's ruling paſſion for admiration had been indeed ſo cheriſhed during the little time ſhe had ſpent in India, by the intoxicating draughts ſhe had received, that ſhe was totally transformed, and become, inſtead of the lively intereſting girl, the finiſhed coquette. Abſorbed in pleaſure, inceſſantly thirſting for new conqueſts, every moment that ſhe was abſent from company ſeemed a blank in her life, and a deprivation of ſome triumph due to her charms, which in her abſence a rival might carry away. Wherever ſhe went, her ſole ſolicitude was to draw all the men about her, to whom ſhe played off all her attractions, till ſhe found ſhe had made a real impreſſion on their hearts, when ſhe aſſumed a diſtance and coldneſs of manner which check-

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ed their riſing hopes; and if they proved daring enough to remonſtrate againſt ſuch conduct, ſhe angrily reproved their preſumption, for ſuppoſing ſhe could mean to give them any encouragement.

But a career like this cannot be laſting; for however ſeverely the mortification of diſappointed hopes may be felt at the firſt moment, the contempt ſuch conduct deſerves ſoon ſucceeds to admiration. Colonel and Mrs. Rainſford often expoſtulated with her on the ſubject, endeavouring to make her ſenſible how much ſhe was degrading herſelf in the eyes of all perſons whoſe eſteem was worth cultivating. But their remonſtrances were vain, her head was turned, nor had reaſon any power to concentrate again her ſcattered ſenſes; and they could only lament, that they had inconſiderately undertaken ſo arduous a taſk, as that of introducing a young and faſcinating female into ſcenes of ſo much danger and temptation. And yet, notwithſtanding that they ſo highly diſapproved her conduct, and thought it right to reprimand her for it, there was ſuch a charm about her, that they could not help loving

her, or ſometimes almoſt involuntarily ſmiling at the manner in which ſhe would parry reproof by a lively repartee, or ſportive ſally, at which ſhe had no inconſiderable talent.

But ſtill, though her character was eſtabliſhed as a coquette, ſhe retained f a while the ſame croud of admirers flocking around her, and that, not merely for the ſake of flirtation on their part, but even with more ſerious views, and ſhe had in a very ſhort time many eligible offers, all of which ſhe refuſed, more through the caprice ariſing from exceſſive admiration, than that ſhe had any ſolid objections to urge againſt them. At length however ſhe ſaw,—with vexation unſpeakable, ſaw,—this ardour in the purſuit of her viſibly declining; and ſhe actually went to a ball, where, ſo far was her hand from being the object of contention, that ſhe was only aſked to dance by one perſon, and that too Captain Stanley, the known admirer of Mrs. Meadows, and the relation of Mrs. Rainsford, who was not in general a dancer, but offered his ſervices on that occaſion merely to ſpare her the mortification of not dancing at all.

Juſt

Juſt at this criſis Colonel Morriſon, an old friend of Rainsford's, who had been many years in India, arrived at Calcutta in his way to England, whither he was retiring to enjoy a very ſplendid fortune. Many years had now elaſped ſince the two Colonels had met, yet this lapſe of time had not ſo obliterated the remembrance of former friendſhip, but that they greatly rejoiced at ſeeing each other; and the batchelor Colonel promiſed to accept his married friend's invitation to give him as much of his company at Eden as he could poſſibly ſpare, while he was waiting for the time of his departure.

Colonel Morriſon had always been a devoted admirer of the fair ſex, and therefore could not behold the aſſemblage of beauty collected at Eden without feeling that propenſity to gallantry which forty-five revolving years had by no means extinguiſhed in his boſom. To Mrs. Rainsford, however, this could be carried no farther than the proper attentions from a gueſt to the miſtreſs of the houſe; but to Mrs. Meadows and Miſs Anneſley there was no occaſion to confine it within ſuch narrow

bounds, and here therefore, he granted it free ſcope. He was indeed extremely ſtruck with the former at firſt ſight, and greatly diſpoſed to pay her the largeſt ſhare of his devoirs; but Cecilia was too much in want of recruits to her muſter-roll of admirers, to ſuffer ſuch an acquiſition as the Colonel, thus to eſcape her.

She began therefore to practiſe the round of manœuvres eſteemed of greateſt efficacy to draw a lover away from a rival; and as Amelia felt not the leaſt inclination to enter the liſts againſt her, but conducted herſelf towards this *preux Chevalier*, with only the general politeneſs which marked her character, the affair was ſoon decided, and Induſtry carried away the prize for which Indifference did not ſtrive to contend.

The enamoured Colonel ſought to recommend himſelf to the object of his paſſion, by all the gallantries with which the God of Love, on ſuch occaſions, inſpires his votaries. He made entertainments in honour of his miſtreſs, at which ſhe was the Queen—the more than Queen indeed—the preſiding Goddeſs, at whoſe ſhrine the incenſe was offered up. Now

he

he gave a rural fête—now a brilliant and courtly ball—now the ſports of the field ſhewed the varieties of his taſte, and now an elegant water party on the meandering Hoogly, where Cecilia ſhone a ſecond Cleopatra, ſailing down the Cydnus.

She felt theſe attentions ſo extremely gratifying, that ſhe gave all poſſible encouragement to her enraptured ſwain to proceed, who conſidered, as indeed did every one elſe, her acceptance of them as yielding to the ſuit which they were intended to prefer. The match was therefore, on all hands, regarded as a certainty; and Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford rejoiced extremely at the proſpect of ſeeing their ward at laſt ſo well diſpoſed of, while Morriſon only waited a favourable opportunity of declaring himſelf more explicitly, and concluding a treaty which he already looked on as in great forwardneſs.

Miſtaken man!—How little did he underſtand the kind of animal he had to deal with!—An opportunity, ſuch as he wiſhed, ſoon preſented itſelf, when he came directly to the point, and made her an offer of his hand and

heart, with a very ſplendid ſettlement. But what was his ſurpriſe, when, inſtead of finding the lady diſpoſed to give a ſerious anſwer, to his ſerious propoſals, ſhe anſwered with her accuſtomed volatility, "You do not ſeem aware, Colonel, that Indamora is not in the room."

"Indamora, Miſs Anneſley!—What do you mean?"

"Why, I thought you always ſaid, that ſhe ſhould be your wife, ſo I concluded that all the eloquence you have been laviſhing on me, was really intended for her."

"True, my dear madam, I have often joked in that way, but I am now ſerious: you cannot have miſtaken the drift of my attentions; and from the favourable manner in which they have been received, I hoped, and ſurely not without reaſon, that my more ſerious propoſals would be received as favourably."

"Moſt *ſerious* Colonel, how could I poſſibly ſuppoſe, when I heard you making love to another, that in fact you were all that time paying your addreſſes to me; but ſince you

are

are ſo very *ſerious* about the matter, why I muſt *ſeriouſly* tell you, that I think Indamora much the properer match for you; I, really, am too old!"

"Nay, come, charming Cecilia, this raillery is quite cruel;—tell me at once that you will make me happy;—come, that ſweet ſmile ſeems to yield aſſent."

"Upon my word, then, Colonel, that ſweet ſmile *ſeems* to do what it by no means *intends*.—Now, would you wiſh to know what this ſame ſweet ſmile really does mean?"

"Yes, come, dear Cecilia, tell me, tell me; I am ſure it cannot have any other than a gentle meaning."

"Why, then, to be very explicit, (as I have no doubt you wiſh) it means, that I think there cannot be a more ridiculous idea than that of marrying a man near thirty years older than myſelf."

"Certainly, my dear madam, there is a conſiderable difference in our ages; but then it is not that I am ſo very old, but that you are very young; but, believe me, charming Miſs Anneſley, that it is not poſſible for a younger man

man to love you more paſſionately than I do."

"Oh, I dare ſay not;—I do not doubt but you love beyond meaſure—that the little god is as buſy as poſſible within you."

—— You feel him now in every part,
Like a new lord he vaunts about your heart,
Surveys in state each corner of your breast;
And now you're all o'er love!

DRYDEN.

"And you will be conſtant?—Yes, ſo conſtant, that"

True swains in love, shall, in the world to come,
Approve their truth by MORRISON; when their rhymes,
Full of protest, and oath, and big compare,
Want similies; truth tir'd with iteration:
As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,
As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,
As iron to adamant, as earth to the centre:
Yet, after all comparisons of truth,
As truth's authentic author to be cited,
As true as MORRISON shall crown up the verse
And sanctify the numbers.

SHAKSPEARE.

"I own

"I own, Miſs Anneſley, that this vivacity is charming; yet muſt I entreat you to be ſerious. I have explained my wiſhes; let me hope they will meet a favourable anſwer."

"Well then, an anſwer you ſhall have with all due gravity and decorum. Do you know now that you are—let me ſee—exactly, yes, as well as I can calculate, exactly eight years older than my father?"

"And what of that, Madam?"

"Why, that, I am ſadly afraid, if I were to take you for my heart's dear lord, I might be apt to make a miſtake when I ſaw you and my father together, and fancy him my huſband, as being ſo much the younger man of the two."

"And is this all the anſwer I am to have, Madam?"

"What more would a reaſonable man deſire?—You ſurely could not wiſh to have a father younger than yourſelf!"

"Then all this time you have been merely ſporting with me, Madam?"

"And done you ſufficient honour too, I think."

"I am

"I am ſorry I have been thus deceived."

"Not more concerned than your humble ſervant, I am ſure, Colonel; believe me, I pity you moſt heartily; diſappointment is a very cruel thing."

"Oh, inſupportable levity!—but hear me, Miſs Anneſley; I ſhall not take any farther notice of the treatment I have received, than to adviſe you to beware how you perſevere in ſuch practices. Remember, (for I can quote as well as you) that when

The vain coquette each ſuit diſdains,
And glories in her lover's pains:
With age ſhe fades, each lover flies;
Contemn'd, forlorn, ſhe pines, and dies!

GAY.

"And I moſt ſincerely thank you, ſage, venerable Colonel, for this moſt ſerious and excellent advice; but at ſeventeen I do not think that I need begin to fear pining and dying;—that will be time enough at the tremendous age of forty-five!"

"This may paſs off now, Miſs Anneſley; but I once more warn you, ere it be too late, beware!"—and he walked out of the room piqued and chagrined beyond deſcription.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XV.

Who trust alone in Beauty's feeble ray,
Boaſt but the worth Baſſora's pearls display;
Drawn from the deep, we own their ſurface bright,
But dark within, they drink no luſtrous light.
Such are the Maids, and such the charms they boaſt,
By ſense unaided, or to virtue loſt.
Self-flattering Sex! your hearts believe in vain
That Love ſhall blind, when once he fires the ſwain;
Or hope a lover by your faults to win,
As ſpots on ermine beautify the ſkin.

COLLINS.

IT was in the abſence of Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, who were gone with Mrs. Meadows to Calcutta on buſineſs, that the converſation above-related had paſſed; and at their return, they met the rejected lover, juſt as he had quitted his miſtreſs's preſence, in extreme vexation. Rainsford, as uſual, ſhook him heartily by the hand, but was quite ſur-

priſed

priſed at the ſtiff and cold way in which his ſalutation was received, ſo unlike Morriſon's accuſtomed manner towards him. "Hey! how's this!" he ſaid, "my dear Colonel, are you not well? Something muſt be amiſs; I hope it is nothing in which I am concerned? I am ſure I am perfectly unconſcious of having given you any offence."

"You may be unconſcious, Colonel Rainsford, but you are pretty nearly concerned, I aſſure you, in the cauſe of my chagrin, ſince it is owing to that infernal coquette you have brought amongſt us. Come into the garden, and I will tell you all."——And he was proceeding thither, when recollecting himſelf, he turned to Mrs. Rainsford and Mrs. Meadows. "I beg your pardon, ladies," he ſaid, "I feel that I have been guilty of great rudeneſs in not paying my reſpects to you; but humbled as my vanity is at this moment, ſome allowance is to be made, if I am wanting in attentions which, under other circumſtances, would be quite unpardonable."

"Oh, I beg you will not make any apology," ſaid Mrs. Rainsford, "I am very ſorry

that

that any thing unpleaſant ſhould have happened to you in our houſe, as I fear is the caſe."

"Why, indeed, I muſt own that I have been treated in a manner which I could not expect under your roof; but you ſhall hear it all from Colonel Rainsford." And then taking hold of Rainsford's arm, they went together into the garden, where Morriſon laid all his grievances open to the ſympathizing boſom of his friend. He, vexed as he was with Cecilia, could yet ſcarcely forbear laughing at the mortification of the rejected lover, who concluded his tale of woe with ſaying, "And now, Sir, judge yourſelf if it is without reaſon that I have called Miſs Anneſley an infernal coquette?"

"I own," anſwered Rainsford, "that what you ſay, aſtoniſhes me beyond expreſſion. I ſaw with great pleaſure your attentions to Cecilia, and thought her fortunate in having engaged the affections of ſuch a man; and I ſaw it with ſtill greater pleaſure, as I flattered myſelf that ſhe felt a like preference for you.—But excuſe her, my dear Colonel, ſhe is young and inexperienced, and is really elevated with

the

the admiration ſhe receives, till ſhe hardly knows whether ſhe be angel or mortal. It is my hope, however, that this infatuation will in time ſubſide; and if you'll permit me, I will talk with her on the ſubject, and try if I cannot bring her to reaſon. I am much miſtaken if ſhe does not like you; but ſome young women are apt to think it a neceſſary form to refuſe a lover two or three times before he ſhall be accepted; and, indeed, I am inclined to think, that when I have talked the matter over ſeriouſly with Miſs Anneſley, ſhe cannot be ſo blind to her own intereſt, as to perſiſt in refuſing ſuch an offer."

"Well, Colonel Rainsford, uſe your diſcretion,—I know that I can rely on you not to do any thing improper by either party; and I really wiſh ſo earneſtly to become the huſband of your fair ward, that I will even run the riſk of being rejected a ſecond time, tho' I have repeatedly declared, that I never would put that into the power of any woman."

"Oh no, I hope it will not be ſo; I ſhall have a bad opinion indeed of my eloquence, if

if I cannot perſuade her to what is ſo evidently for her own advantage."

"Well, go then, my dear Sir; but remember, that it is now or never;—no third offer ſhall be made!"

"Adieu, I hope to bring you good news," ſaid Rainsford; and he went immediately to Cecilia's dreſſing-room, where he found her at her piano-forte. He drew a chair, and ſat down by her: "My dear Cecilia," he ſaid, "I feel it painful to the laſt degree, to be obliged to addreſs you again in the language of reproof and expoſtulation; yet the relation in which I now ſtand to you, ſupplying the place of an abſent father, renders this taſk indiſpenſibly neceſſary."

"Colonel Rainsford, I know very well to what this preamble tends; Morriſon, I ſuppoſe, has been exhibiting articles of accuſation againſt me, at the awful bar of the ſupreme court of judicature erected in your library, for deciding on all points of female decorum and propriety of behaviour! He has been at once proſecutor and evidence, and you have united in your own perſon, the offices of judge and jury;

jury; and thus poor I, without any one to defend me, have been found guilty of the heinous crime of rejecting him for a husband, and sentence of perpetual old-maidism is passed upon me!—Now, is it not so?"—And she gave him a tap on the shoulder, accompanied with a smile, enough to take captive half a dozen hearts at once.

"Come, come, Cecilia, this is really not a time for raillery; I came to talk with you as a friend anxious for your happiness, and if you will not listen to me, believe me, you may live hereafter to repent of your conduct when it shall be too late."

"Now pray, my dear Colonel, do learn some new saw against the next lecture;—repenting when it is too late, is really so hackneyed, that I wonder the moralizers themselves are not as much tired with repeating as their auditors are with hearing it."

"Hear me, Cecilia; hear me, I entreat you!—Wit and repartee can never be worse applied than on the present occasion, when you have so much at stake: Reflect for one moment

ment on the fate which the coquette will always inevitably meet; and ſurely,——"

"I have reflected upon it moſt ſeriouſly, I aſſure you; and I find it to be—dreadful to think on!"—

"Oh, Cecilia! Cecilia!"

"That ſhe may abſolutely loſe all chance of being the wife of the gay, the gallant, the juvenile Colonel Morriſon!"

"Ah, that you could for one moment be ſerious, Cecilia."

"And loſe the power to charm!—But indeed, Colonel, there is not the leaſt occaſion for all theſe long faces and ſolemn ejaculations. The truth is, that Morriſon has been flattering himſelf, becauſe I was ſo obliging as to liſten to all his flights of gallantry, and conſent to be the goddeſs of his parties of pleaſure, that I was moſt deſperately in love with him; and ſince he finds himſelf miſtaken, his *amour propre* has received a terrible wound, and he now lies in a ſtate of mortification;—that's all!"

"That he is mortified is indeed very true; but it is his love, more than his vanity, that feels the diſappointment." "Oh,

"Oh, if that be the caſe, it is eaſily remedied; it is but transferring his love to ſome other object, who may be kinder than the poor miſguided Cecilia."

"Miſguided Cecilia indeed!—I underſtand perfectly well the ſarcaſtic manner in which thoſe words were uttered; but, take care how you puſh matters too far, for, Cecilia, I muſt and will be heard. You force me to be ſevere when I would be kind; I would argue with you as a friend, and you treat me with levity."

"From this moment then I am dumb."

"Then I may have a chance of being heard, when I tell you that your conduct with regard to Colonel Morriſon has been highly cenſurable. No one could ſee your behaviour to him, without ſuppoſing your intention was to encourage his addreſſes; and a woman cannot act a more contemptible part than to encourage a lover for no other reaſon than the deſpicable pleaſure ſhe takes in recounting over the number of offers ſhe has refuſed. One who was poſſeſſed of any real delicacy of feeling, would be ſo far from ſeeking the attentions

tentions of a man whom ſhe had no idea of marrying, that while ſhe freely aſſociated with him as a companion and general acquaintance, ſhe would take care that he ſhould underſtand the encouragement ſhe gave him to be in that light only."

"And, my dear Colonel Rainsford, am I to blame if Morriſon has been ſo ſhort-ſighted, that he could not diſcover that I meant no more than a little innocent flirtation, and to amuſe myſelf with an old man, becauſe you had ſucceeded but too well in driving away all the young ones."

"No, Cecilia, Colonel Morriſon has not been ſhort-ſighted, but it was his misfortune to entertain a better opinion of you than it appears you deſerve. He could not ſuppoſe that the return you made to his advances was mere flirtation, as you ſtile it; and, as a man of honour himſelf, he would not, till you had done ſomething to juſtify the ſuſpicion, ſuſpect you *not* to be a woman of honour."

"What do you mean, Colonel Rainsford? —a woman of honour!—this is language which I could not expect from you;—inſtead

of throwing this aſperſion on me yourſelf, I ſhould rather expect you would call any one, who might dare to throw out ſuch an inſinuation, to a ſtrict and dreadful account."

"You may perhaps think that I ſpeak harſhly, Cecilia; but it is not now a time to gloſs things over: it is proper, it is neceſſary, that you ſhould be told the plain unvarniſhed truth; and I ſhall therefore ſay, without attempting to diſguiſe the matter, that I hold the character of a coquette to be not above a degree better than that of a common proſtitute.—Nay in ſome reſpects it is even worſe, for the proſtitute is too often driven into that courſe reluctantly, and from abſolute neceſſity, and though her perſon may be contaminated, her mind may not be inſenſible to, and may deteſt, the loathſome life ſhe leads, from which ſhe would gladly, were it in her power, withdraw.—But the coquette has not any excuſe whatever for her conduct; and while ſhe guards her perſon, ſhe proſtitutes her more noble part, her mind, without remorſe.—You weep, Cecilia," and he took her hand affectionately, "May I not hail this as a happy token?

token?—May I not hope it is a teſtimony that you are at laſt ſenſible of the folly of your conduct, and will determine on its reformation."

"Yes, I weep indeed, Colonel Rainsford, for your unkindneſs has wrung me to the ſoul; from you I never expected to hear ſuch ſevere reproaches. Why did I ever quit my father's houſe, and hope elſewhere to find another ſo kind, ſo gentle a monitor? But you ſhall not be troubled any longer with a gueſt whoſe company you think ſo irkſome;—I expected to have found in you and Mrs. Rainsford a ſecond father and mother,—oh how have I been miſtaken!—but I will return to England by the firſt poſſible conveyance, and make no doubt but thoſe dear parents will receive me again with open arms."

"Cecilia, you aſtoniſh me!—has any thing in mine or my Anna's conduct towards you, deſerved ſuch a reproach as this? Reflect but a moment, and I am convinced you will be ſorry that it has been uttered. We have ſought by all means in our power to promote your welfare and happineſs; we loved you as

a daughter or a ſiſter, and wiſh ſtill to conſider you as ſuch; nor am I actuated at this moment by any other principle than an ardent wiſh to make you ſee and relinquiſh ſome errors of which you have been guilty."

"Well, pray ſay no more, Colonel Rainsford; I own I ſpoke raſhly, and beg your pardon; you have both been kind to me, very kind. But why would you wiſh me to marry againſt my inclination?"

"I do not by any means wiſh that, Cecilia;—nor am I now ſpeaking to you ſo much on Colonel Morriſon's account, as from a wiſh to ſee an alteration in your general behaviour. Leave off the coquettiſh airs which you have lately aſſumed; believe me, that while they draw a croud of flutterers about you, which like the butterfly round the roſe, hover about and admire it for a moment, and then flutter to ſome other and pay a like tranſitory tribute of admiration;—ſo thoſe who pay you the moſt outward homage, bear you not in their hearts any real reſpect, but ridicule in private the goddeſs whom they have been adoring in public; and only pay

their

their devotions at the ſhrine of your beauty, till another object more new, and therefore in their eyes more lovely, ſhall preſent itſelf. And can ſuch homage be really acceptable to the female heart?—Oh, how much is it unworthy the notice of a rational being."

"What would you have me do then, Colonel Rainsford?—muſt I in company remain ſilent and reſerved, immovable and inanimate as the marble ſtatues which guard the portals of your manſion?—for what purpoſe were animal ſpirits given us if we are to live with them in a ſtate of perpetual warfare?"

"Oh no!—give them *free* but give them alſo *fair* ſcope. Nothing is ſo charming as natural vivacity, nothing ſo deteſtable as the artificial airs of coquetry. The one inſenſibly attracts the attention and admiration of every one whoſe attention is worth attracting, while it keeps at a diſtance the worthleſs and undeſerving: The other, while it diſguſts every heart where any ſenſe of virtue or real delicacy reſides, draws around it nothing but a croud of libertines as full of deceit and artifice as itſelf."

"Well, pray ſpare me now, Colonel, I will indeed think of what you have ſaid, and endeavour to profit by it; and, if you wiſh it, I will now ſee Colonel Morriſon again, and if he ſhall chooſe to renew his addreſſes, endeavour to like him better than I have done."

"Not for the world ſhould you and Colonel Morriſon now meet. Reflect, Cecilia, on what I have been ſaying, reflect on your paſt behaviour, on the reaſon you had given him to expect a different reply to his propoſals; reflect on his worth, his ſweetneſs of temper, and the fair proſpect which his wife would have of matrimonial happineſs;—and, laſtly, reflect on his ſplendid fortune, ſo far beyond your reaſonable expectations. I mention this circumſtance laſt, though it is generally made the firſt object of conſideration; but I think it a very inferior one, although, at the ſame time, I am ſo far from pretending abſolutely to deſpiſe fortune, that I freely confeſs it to be my opinion, that, if all other things are agreeable, a good fortune well managed very much enlarges the ſphere of happineſs. Reflect then on all theſe things, my dear Cecilia,

and

and if ſome time hence, when you and Colonel Morriſon are both more cool on the ſubject, he ſhall chooſe to renew his propoſals, it will remain for you to decide whether you think you can be happy with him, and give him your anſwer accordingly."

Colonel Rainsford then left the room, rejoicing that he had diſcharged this painful duty, a duty indeed which he felt moſt irkſome: Yet when he ſaw a young woman entruſted to his care, and for whom he had a very ſincere regard, ſtanding on the brink of a dangerous precipice, he was reſolved not to ſhrink from any efforts, however unpleaſant to himſelf, which might ſave her from falling; and while in Miſs Anneſley's eſtimation he was treating her harſhly and unkindly, he was himſelf as great, or perhaps a greater, ſufferer by it than herſelf.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XVI.

This night I hold an old-accustom'd feast,
Whereto I have invited many a guest,
Such as I love; and you among the store
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.
SHAKSPEARE.

RAINSFORD took a few turns in the garden to compose himself, as he had been a good deal ruffled by his conversation with Cecilia, and then rejoined Morrison and the ladies, to whom he related what had passed. It was then agreed, that as some prospect appeared of a favourable turn in Miss Annesley's conduct, the Colonel should abstain from coming to Eden for some days, and wait the event; and in this determination he took his leave, saying, "Oh, how truly should I rejoice to see this lovely young creature recalled

to

to herſelf, and for this ſhe ſurely is not yet too far gone; but every thing hangs on the preſent moment: if her fatal propenſity cannot now be ſubdued, ſhe is loſt for ever—and what a loſs to mankind!"

Nothing more paſſed on the ſubject with Cecilia, for ſeveral days, when Rainsford thinking that ſufficient time had been allowed her for reflection, took an opportunity of recommencing it, addreſſing her, "My dear, Miſs Anneſley, have you conſidered over what lately paſſed between us?"

"I have indeed, very much, Colonel; and convinced of my own errors, and the juſtice, as well as kindneſs, of all that you ſaid, I am determined, henceforward, to make an entire alteration in my behaviour, and truſt to your candour and regard for me, that you will forgive the improper language I then uſed."

"Oh, Cecilia!—my dear Cecilia! how much you rejoice me!" and he involuntarily claſped her in his arms, and kiſſed her with all the warmth of fraternal affection.

Cecilia, overcome with the ſtrong impreſſion which her anſwer had made on the Co-

lonel, could not immediately ſpeak; they ſat, therefore, ſilent for two or three minutes, the Colonel having taken her hand affectionately, when he reſumed the converſation;—"And, Colonel Morriſon, have you thought on that ſubject?"

"I have weighed it deliberately, Colonel Rainsford; and the reſult is, that if he is inclined to renew his propoſals, I am determined now, to receive them in a very different manner: But," and here ſhe bluſhed deeply, and held down her head,—"do you think there is any chance of that? Will he not reſent the treatment he has received?"

"Oh, do not fear that, Cecilia; I know him well; know him to be too ſweet-tempered, too liberal, to think any thing more of words, uttered in a thoughtleſs, unguarded moment, eſpecially from one he loves ſo well."

"But how ſhall I dare to meet him again, feeling ſo much ſhame as I do now for my paſt conduct?"

"Think not of that, my dear girl; the ſhame is only in doing wrong, not in acknowledging and atoning for it. Yet, let me ſay one

one thing more, Cecilia; let me conjure you to examine your heart thoroughly, before you ſhall ſee Morriſon again, whether you really think you can be happy with him as a huſband; your preſent ſentiments may ariſe only from a feeling that you have acted wrong, and wiſh now to make amends for it; a laudable principle, no doubt—but not a ſufficient one to ſecure you happineſs in the marriage ſtate."

"I have thought, more than once, on this very ſubject, my dear Sir; and I think, after ſtrictly examining my heart, I may with confidence ſay, that quite unoccupied as it is by any other attachment, if my affections are not at preſent ardently fixed on the Colonel, yet I have ſuch a reſpect for his character, and ſuch a conviction of the ſweetneſs of his temper, that I have hopes of being quite happy in the union."

"Well, then, I will not loſe a moment in conveying him the welcome tidings of this alteration in your ſentiments!"

He was as good as his word, and wrote immediately to Morriſon, who loſt no time in

coming over to Eden, where every thing was ſpeedily ſettled between him and Cecilia; and it was agreed, that as ſoon as the conſent of the Governor-General to the marriage could be obtained, (the aſking which is a form always gone through in India) it ſhould be privately ſolemnized, and they ſhould depart for England immediately.

In all that had hitherto paſſed, Miſs Anneſley had been perfectly ſincere; ſhe was deeply impreſſed with what Rainsford had urged to her, and it had come with the greater weight as he was not himſelf an old man, and inſenſible to the pleaſures which are moſt attractive to a youthful mind; and as ſhe, in part, felt the juſtice of his obſervations from the degree of neglect into which ſhe found herſelf ſinking, ſhe began, therefore, to think, that though there was a great diſproportion of years between her and the Colonel, yet that ſhe might, perhaps, be happier with him than with a younger man, and fancied ſhe found charms in him, which, till then, had never occurred to her mind. In ſhort, ſhe wiſhed to be married, as ſhe thought conſiderable

ſiderable conſequence would thus be added to her, and the admirers, who had fallen off, perhaps be reſtored; for, indeed, it appeared to her that they were always more ſteady in their attentions to a married, than to a ſingle woman; and by ſuch reflections, and many others, ſhe at laſt perſuaded herſelf that ſhe really liked Morriſon, and wiſhed earneſtly for the match.

Fortunate would it have been, had nothing intervened between the arrangement of this affair, and the celebration of the marriage, to alter her ſentiments; but one fatal evening undid what Rainsford had ſpent ſo much time and argument to accompliſh. Before the conſent of the Governor-General, who was at that time up the country, could arrive, a grand maſked ball was given by the Chief Juſtice to celebrate the birth of his firſt ſon, to which, of courſe, all perſons of any note in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, were invited, and amongſt the reſt Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, and Miſs Anneſley.

Fain would the two former have declined accepting this invitation, for they ſaw how

ſevere

ſevere a trial this muſt prove to Cecilia's newly-adopted diſcretion, and trembled for the conſequences: but etiquette forbade a refuſal; it would have been an affront to a perſon of the Chief Juſtices's conſequence, not to be paſſed over; nor was Cecilia's going leſs a matter of neceſſity than their own. They mentioned their apprehenſions to Morriſon, who, not ſo well aware as themſelves of the extent of the danger, treated them lightly, and ſaid, he thought they were too ſevere on the young lady, in ſuppoſing her new principles were ſo weakly rooted as that they were in danger of being eradicated again by one night's amuſement. Beſides, he urged, that he ſhould be there as well as themſelves, and they could all prevent, by their attentions, any propenſity they might obſerve to her going aſtray: In ſhort, far from entertaining like fears with his friends, he ſeemed rather to feel a pride in exhibiting the charming Cecilia in ſo public a manner as his intended bride.

For her, from the moment the invitation was accepted, no other ſubject could occupy her thoughts. She received Morriſon's viſits, indeed,

indeed, as uſual, but could hardly conceal, even in his preſence, how much they were become a painful ceremony to her, which prevented her attending to a ſubject far more agreeable; nay, perhaps, was hardly aware herſelf, how much ſhe found them ſo. Her wedding clothes had employed her attention extremely, ſince the match had been determined; but now they were entirely ſuperſeded by her dreſs for the Chief-Juſtice's gala, about which ſhe was perpetually conſulting Mrs. Meadows and Mrs. Rainsford, and arranging her ornaments in a thouſand different ways, to ſee which would produce the moſt ſtriking effect. She reſolved, however, to conduct herſelf with the greateſt prudence. She would not go in any character, as that might lead her inadvertently to throw aſide reſerve more than might be proper;—neither, for the ſame reaſon, did ſhe intend dancing, but determined to attach herſelf entirely to her own party, which, beſides the Rainsford's, was to conſiſt of her betrothed Lord, and Captain and Mrs. Yelverton, whom they were

to

to join in the veſtibule at the Chief-Juſtice's houſe.

The evening at length arrived, when they were conducted into a ſcene of the moſt perfect enchantment. The grand ſaloon, which was the principal place of aſſembling, was an octagon with a ſplendid dome in the center, ornamented with coloured lamps in various devices. Around it was a gallery, ſupported by ſixteen marble columns, containing a very fine band of vocal and inſtrumental muſic, whence a moſt advantageous coup-d'oeil might be taken of the company below. The columns were wreathed with artificial flowers, amongſt which lights were interſperſed ſo ingeniouſly, that while they had the fineſt effect in illuminating the room, the glare was entirely ſhaded. The walls of the room were ornamented both above and below with freſco paintings, and all around were ſofas, on which thoſe who ſhould be wearied with walking or dancing, might repoſe.

One ſide of this enchanted building was open to the gardens, which were ſplendidly illuminated, and in which, temporary pavi-

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lions were erected for different purpoſes; ſome had tables for cards or dice, others muſic for dancing, others refreſhments of all kinds, others ſeats for converſation; — no form was obſerved, all were left to make their own parties; and chooſe their own amuſements, and it ſeemed impoſſible that any one ſhould find a ſubject for diſcontent.

At ſupper, two large rooms, one on each ſide the ſaloon, were thrown open, and diſplayed tables ſet out with the moſt conſummate elegance. At this the company were to unmaſk, as a ſecurity againſt any one abuſing his concealment, by making it a veil for improper behaviour. After ſupper, the amuſements were renewed; nor were the rooms cleared till a very late hour, when all departed highly ſatisfied, — all, all, ſave the mortified Colonel Morriſon!

At the appointed place of rendezvous, Captain and Mrs. Yelverton had met the Eden party, to whom they introduced a young officer, Lieutenant Macdonnel, an Iriſhman and friend of Captain Yelverton, who had arrived at Calcutta but the day before, and on being mentioned

mentioned to the Chief Juſtice, was immediately invited to his fête.

The Lieutenant had not a larger ſhare of a certain quality called *mauvaise honte*, than is common to perſons of his nation; like other Hibernians too, he piqued himſelf exceedingly on his gallantry to the fair ſex, and was always ready for an amour with any pretty girl who would give him ſufficient encouragement; and as he was a handſome young fellow, he ſeldom failed of meeting with what he wanted, ſo that he had commonly two or three on his hands at a time. Thus he had often had his foot on the threſhold of Hymen's Temple, though he had never yet fairly gotten within the doors.

Miſs Anneſley and he were both maſked at their firſt introduction; but Macdonnel was not a little ſtruck with Cecilia's figure and elegant appearance, and ſhe thought him a ſmart genteel looking man. He ſaid two or three gallant things; theſe were ſounds too grateful to her ears to be unattended to: He ſaw that ſhe ſeemed pleaſed; and when they entered the ſaloon, attached himſelf to her entirely.—

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He flattered; ſhe could not help liſtening to him, nor repreſs the delight with which ſhe felt her heart palpitate, at finding that ſhe ſtill only wanted to be ſeen, in order to be admired; and in the intoxication of the moment, forgetting all her reſolutions, ſhe yielded herſelf up in the moſt unreſerved manner to his attentions. He ſolicited her to dance, to which ſhe conſented without heſitation; and he was leading her off for this purpoſe, when a hint from Mrs. Rainsford reminded her of her reſolution to refuſe any ſolicitation of the kind: But ſhe was by that time grown inſenſible to every thing but the Lieutenant's aſſiduities; and, ſpite of the admonition, joined the dancers. Here aroſe a freſh ſource for admiration of each other: Amongſt the female dancers, who could vie with Cecilia? Amongſt thoſe of the other ſex, who could enter the liſts againſt Macdonnel? He, for his part, every moment more and more charmed, whiſpered his fair partner ſeveral times as they went down the dance, that he was impatient for ſupper, when he ſhould behold a face, which, if it correſponded in any degree with the charms

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he had hitherto witneſſed, muſt be enchanting indeed.

The happy moment arrived; he handed her into the ſupper-room; the maſks were taken off, and he felt the greateſt aſtoniſhment at the blaze of beauty he beheld. After ſupper, they danced again; the ſight of each other's faces added greatly to their animation; and by the time they ſeparated, each thought the other the moſt charming of their reſpective ſexes:—while poor Morriſon, who had in vain attempted to diſcharge the duties of a betrothed lover to his miſtreſs, and had received nothing in return for his intended aſſiduities but ſlight and rebuff, returned home, curſing in his heart the whole female ſex, and himſelf ſtill more, for having ſuffered himſelf to be made ſo egregious a dupe.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XVII.

Oft when the world imagine women ſtray,
The Sylphs thro' myſtic mazes guide their way:
Thro' all the giddy circle they purſue,
And old impertinence expel by new.

POPE.

CONSCIENCE-Stricken with the impropriety of her behaviour, Cecilia extremely dreaded the ſight of Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford the next day, expecting the expoſtulation which ſhe felt to have deſerved; and ſhe made an excuſe of fatigue from the preceding evening, for not appearing till dinner, at which a large company was expected, when ſhe thought ſhe could come before them with better grace. Rainsford was almoſt as much mortified at this excuſe as at the behaviour which occaſioned it, for he felt aſſured that the one was the

the conſequence of the other; and reſolved as he was, to try once more the effect of reproof on this, as he began to fear, irreclaimable coquette, he wiſhed ſo painful a moment over as ſoon as poſſible. But there was no remedy; and although he ſuſpected her fatigue to be mere pretence, yet he was obliged to act as if it had been a ſolemn reality, and defer his lecture till ſhe ſhould chooſe her health to be in a ſtate for its reception.

In the courſe of the morning, a meſſage came from Captain and Mrs. Yelverton, who were to make a part of the company at dinner, to excuſe themſelves, on account of unavoidable buſineſs; and with this meſſage came alſo a letter from Mrs. Yelverton to Miſs Anneſley, in which, after hoping that ſhe was not fatigued with her exertions the evening before, ſhe very indiſcreetly proceeded: "You have perfectly enchanted Macdonnel, Cecilia; he ſwears by all the gods celeſtial, terreſtrial and aquatic, by the ſemi-dei and heroes, that he never beheld ſo many charms concentred in one woman, no, though he has ſeen all the moſt celebrated beauties of London, Dublin,

lin, and Paris. Amongſt them, dear ſoul! his heart has had many a ſcratch, but they went no farther than the ſurface; now he is pierced "*to his heart's core, aye, to his heart of heart*;" no time can ever heal the wound, no balſam allay the ſmart, ſave the poſſeſſion of the beauty which has occaſioned it. Then, he is in ſuch a rage with Morriſon; —what! ſhall ſuch grace, ſuch elegance, ſuch youth, ſuch more than mortal charms, be ſacrificed to a man old enough to be her father? Hateful idea!—Shall the veteran, ſinking rapidly into the vale of years, claſp to his boſom a prize of which the fineſt form of manly youth is ſcarcely deſerving? Oh, all ye gods, it is not to be borne! No, by heaven, I never can ſit by a tame ſpectator of an union ſo incongruous—patiently behold Venus devoting herſelf to the hated embraces of Plutus! —Thus he raves, walking up and down the room almoſt like a madman: But our comfort is, that theſe violent impreſſions are never laſting, elſe we ſhould rue the hapleſs hour when we firſt threw him in the way of an object ſo fatal to his repoſe; and as he expects

to

to leave Calcutta again in four or five days, it is probable that all this ſtore of admiration will be forgotten; ſome other paſſion will ſucceed, which, tranſitory like the preſent, will ſoon yield to another, and that other to another ſtill, for ſuch and ſo variable, Yelverton tells me, has been the uniform ſucceſſion of this hero's attachments."

"What!" thought Cecilia within herſelf, as ſhe finiſhed this letter, "Does Zelinda ſuppoſe *my* power ſo limited? Does ſhe think *my* chains, like thoſe of meaner beauties, can be once worn and ſhaken off again at pleaſure? Does ſhe dare to rank *me* with the common herd? Ah, little does ſhe know the extent of my ſway, when I chooſe to exert all my powers in maintaining it! — No, no, Macdonnel ſhall not eſcape me thus; he may flatter himſelf with the idea that he can flutter about the cage awhile, then ope the door, and hail himſelf releaſed again from thraldom; but he ſhall know, that a heart once my captive, ſhall always be ſo, if ſuch be my good pleaſure."— Then ſhe turned her reflections to Morriſon. "Fool that I was," ſhe thought, "to ſuppoſe

that

that I could be happy with him! What if he be rich, wealth cannot purchaſe youth; and what is wealth when put in competition with grace, elegance, and that engaging aſſiduity ſhewn me by this new admirer? Oh, what a contraſt was that to the coldneſs of Morrison's behaviour? Did he, though my deſtined huſband, ſhew me a tenth part of the attention which I received from this polite Hibernian, who was an entire ſtranger? No, abſorbed in cards, he ſat regardleſs of me; and for aught he ſeemed to care, I might have been left to myſelf for the whole evening."

Here it muſt be obſerved, that had Morriſon been preſent to defend his own cauſe, he could have urged that this cenſure was wholly undeſerved. It was his inclination to ſhew his deſtined bride all the attention their relative ſituations demanded; but ſhe was ſo engaged with her new gallant, that if he attempted to approach her, he received nothing but the moſt mortifying repulſes, and went to cards through mere vexation of mind, and to kill the time which it was neceſſary he ſhould remain there, in compliment to the donor of the

entertainment. All this he might have urged, had he known the charges brought againſt him; but Cecilia had the whole cauſe in her own hands, and ſhe choſe therefore, like many other *impartial judges*, to hear only one ſide of the queſtion. She proceeded:

"It is plain enough now, what has made Colonel Rainsford ſo anxious of late to keep me out of company; he wanted to ſecure me for this old friend of his; and was well convinced that, in order to do ſo, he muſt prevent my ſeeing any younger man. But, thank heaven, I ſee through all this before it is too late, and am reſolved to diſcard this venerable gallant, whatever may be the conſequence; then, at leaſt, I ſhall be at *liberty* to beſtow myſelf on one ſo much more deſerving of me, as the charming Macdonnel." Much more reaſoning, equally ſolid with the above, paſſed in the mind of this infatuated young creature; and in this diſpoſition, ſhe wrote an anſwer to Mrs. Yelverton, full of the moſt high-flown panegyric on Macdonnel's beauty and politeneſs of manners, and lamenting her engagement with Morriſon, into which ſhe ſaid ſhe had

had been over-perſuaded for the ſake of his money: She did not, however, give a hint of any intention of diſcarding him, as that was an idea by no means yet matured in her mind, and ſhe waited till it ſhould be more ſo before ſhe thought of its diſcloſure.

But ſhe waited not long ere the matter was finally decided. Morriſon, chagrined to the laſt degree, had paſſed a very unquiet night after the fête, in reflecting on the occurrences of that evening. Extremely ſmitten with Cecilia, he knew not how entirely to give her up; yet, from the ſpecimens which ſhe had given him already, he ſaw too plainly what he might expect from her future conduct, and he doubted whether, for her own ſake as well as his, he ought to ſuffer the connection to proceed any farther. Full of theſe perplexing thoughts, he knew not how to go over to Eden, to conſult with Rainsford on the ſubject, although he earneſtly wiſhed it; ſtill leſs could he prevail on himſelf to keep his engagement to dine there, when he was ſure of meeting Cecilia, which, under *exiſting circumſtances*, he very much dreaded. Thus heſita-

ting and wavering, he paſſed the day reſolving and unreſolving a hundred different plans of procedure, and night overtook him in the ſame undecided ſituation.

Cecilia however ſpared him the trouble of coming to any deciſion, by deciding the matter for him. When ſhe found that he came not to Eden, as in duty bound, to enquire after her health in conſequence of the laſt evening's fatigue, ſhe thought this ſo groſs a piece of negligence that it furniſhed her with a fair pretext for refuſing ever to ſee him again. Not that ſhe wiſhed for his company, for ſhe dreaded nothing ſo much as the ſight of him, excepting that of Rainsford, but as ſhe was on the ſearch for a pretence to excuſe her breaking off the connection, ſhe was glad to ſeize the ſhadow of one which he thus afforded. She therefore, without giving a hint of her intention to any one, diſpatched a letter the next morning, in which ſhe upbraided him in very high and angry terms for the ſlight he had ſhewn her, ſaying, that ſuch conduct before marriage ſufficiently inſtructed her what ſhe might expect afterwards; and as ſhe had

had too much ſpirit to endure ſuch treatment patiently, ſhe ſaw no proſpect but of eternal diſcontent for them both.

"For theſe reaſons," ſhe ſaid, "I have come to a reſolution that all intercourſe between us ſhall henceforth ceaſe.—Let the world accuſe me of caprice, I regard it not, while convinced I am acting more for our mutual happineſs, by putting an end to ſo ill-aſſorted a connection, than by ſuffering it to proceed farther. I once thought I could love you, but you have happily ſhewn me my error ere it was too late, ſhewn me the folly of which I ſhould be guilty in giving my hand to a man, who thinks he confers ſuch an honour upon me by this alliance, that he may wave the common attentions which in his ſituation are generally expected. Take this therefore, Colonel Morriſon, as my final deciſion, againſt which I will not hearken to any appeal; I will never become your wife; and, farther, ſhall uniformly refuſe ſeeing you whenever you may come to Eden."

So far Cecilia was certainly in the right, as, after all that had paſſed, it was moſt deſirable that

the connection ſhould be diſſolved; but her manner of conducting the tranſaction was as certainly highly exceptionable, and her motives throughout by no means the moſt laudable. She took care that this letter ſhould be ſent before Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford could poſſibly know any thing of the matter, and then prepared herſelf to meet the expected reproofs from the former, which ſhe had now no excuſe for delaying; nor, indeed, wiſhed longer to delay, as ſhe could cut the matter ſhort at once, by announcing the ſtep ſhe had taken.

Breakfaſt being concluded, and the Colonel, as he had deſired, left alone with Cecilia, he began:—"After what has already paſſed between us, Cecilia, it gives me unſpeakable concern to be compelled to addreſs you again in the language of reproach;—why, why will you force me to it?—believe me, it is no leſs irkſome to me than to yourſelf; but ſtanding as I do, in the place of your father, I ſhould be guilty of a very culpable neglect, were I to omit one of the moſt important duties that ſtation requires, nor admoniſh you when

when I behold in your conduct ſuch deviations from that purity of character, which it ſhould be every young woman's firſt care to preſerve."

"I underſtand this perfectly well, Colonel Rainsford, and may as well ſpare both you and myſelf any farther trouble or chagrin on the ſubject, by telling you, at once, that Morriſon and I are ſeparated for ever!"

"Good God! how much you aſtoniſh me! —ſeparated for ever!—how can this be?—I thought that you had not ſeen him ſince Tueſday evening?"

"Very true, Sir; and for that reaſon I am determined never to ſee him again, and have, this morning, ſent him his diſmiſſion."

"Can this be really true?—So very haſty, Cecilia,—without a word ſaid to any one?—Was this quite proper behaviour to me and Mrs. Rainsford?—And ſurely, after your own conduct on Tueſday, an apology, on your part, to Colonel Morriſon, would have been more becoming, than to diſmiſs him in anger. Beſides, I really cannot poſſibly gueſs on what you have grounded this ſo ſudden exception."

"Had I then no reaſon to be offended, when, circumſtanced as we were, he not only never came to enquire after me yeſterday, but did not even condeſcend to make an apology for his abſence?"

"Cecilia, Cecilia, you make my heart bleed!—I ſee you on the brink of a frightful precipice, and would fain ſnatch you from the danger. It is not Colonel Morriſon's neglect, as you erroneouſly term it, that has wrought this change, but it is that another object has attracted your fancy; and you have, therefore, with inexcuſable levity, diſcarded a man who poſſeſſes every ſolid recommendation to your regard, in order to indulge your coquettiſh fondneſs for admiration, with one to whoſe character and proſpects in the world you are an entire ſtranger."

"Say, rather, Colonel Rainsford, that I have now acted with ſincerity in abandoning a diſproportionate connection, to which intereſt alone could prompt me, and encouraging the addreſſes of a man, for whom my heart feels a preference, and whoſe years are ſo much better ſuited to my own."

"And

"And can you ſay, Cecilia, that intereſt alone induced the promiſe of your hand to Colonel Morriſon?—Did I not, on a former occaſion, urge you on this point, when you aſſured me to the contrary?"

"I own it; I did ſay ſo, and had actually, at that time, perſuaded myſelf into a belief that I liked the Colonel, becauſe I ſaw your exceſſive anxiety for the match; but I am now ſo well convinced I never can like him, that I am reſolved not to ſee him more; and I thought it much better to ſay ſo at once, and ſave farther altercation on the ſubject."

"And if ſuch be your real conviction, I blame you not for breaking it off ere too late; it is better, if this conviction ſtrike the mind but the moment before the union be completed, even then not to proceed, than to be tied to miſery for life. But I blame the *manner* in which this has been conducted exceedingly, and am, beſides, afraid that this is not all, but that a ſtronger reaſon remains behind; and if you had not unfortunately ſeen

Macdonnel, poor Morriſon had never been diſcarded."

"And if I do like Macdonnel, Sir, thank Heaven I am not accountable either to you or Morriſon for my likes or diſlikes. It is true that my father entruſted me to your care, but it was as a guardian to my youth, not as a tyrant over my inclinations; nor would I, even to my father, yield ſuch an implicit obedience, as to marry a man I could not like, becauſe he recommended the union."

Colonel Rainsford was at a loſs how to reply to ſuch unfounded inſinuations. Conſcious that his behaviour to Cecilia had been uniformly that of a ſincere friend, without the leaſt tincture of the tyrant, he felt them extremely irritating; yet, reſolved not to ſuffer himſelf to be put out of temper, he calmly anſwered:

"If ever I had ſhewn any diſpoſition, Cecilia, to abuſe the truſt Mr. Anneſley has repoſed in me, by playing the tyrant over you in any way, I might be angry at the inſinuations you have thrown out; but an undeſerved charge is always more wounding to the accuſer

cuſer than the accuſed. I wiſh to be conſidered as your friend, and have uniformly endeavoured to prove myſelf ſuch, by reaſoning with you on your errors, in mild, though perhaps forcible language, and ſeeking to convince your underſtanding that you were in the wrong, not to impoſe any thing on you in the ſtile of authority.—Is this to have played the tyrant?"

"Indeed, I beg your pardon, Colonel Rainsford—I beg your pardon a hundred times; you certainly have not played the tyrant; you have only carried the language of exhortation, recommendation, reprobation, and two or three other *ations* to the utmoſt limits they would poſſibly allow of; and arrived at the frontiers of the dominions of *command*, you have invited that power to an alliance, in caſe they could not be ſucceſsful without *it*."

"And if I did act thus, Cecilia, the alliance, like moſt other *grand alliances*, *was ſcarcely ſooner made than broken*; for certainly the forces of *command* have never been called to fight under my banners, nor are thoſe

mercenaries a ſort of troops for whoſe aſſiſtance I ever wiſh.—The *ations*, as you pleaſe to term them, are the ſoldiers of freedom, and ſuch only I deſire to ſupport my cauſe. But let us leave theſe metaphors, they are very fine figures of rhetoric, no doubt; but they are poor ſubſtitutes for ſolid argument."

"Well, then, to cut ſhort the matter, I entreat of you, Colonel Rainsford, as you value my peace of mind, to ſay no more on the ſubject of Morriſon; it is become ſo irkſome to me, that I cannot think of it with compoſure; and I am ſo reſolute never to ſee him more, that all expoſtulation with me will be perfectly vain. As to Macdonnel, whatever may be my preſent ſentiments with regard to him, depend on it that I ſhall not take any ſteps in the affair, inconſiſtent with diſcretion, and with the reſpect I owe to myſelf, my family, and my ſex."

This latter declaration was undoubtedly a very fine ſounding one; but Colonel Rainsford had ſeen ſufficient to convince him how far he might rely on the *diſcretion* of the young lady; at leaſt, if he were to meaſure the fu-

ture

ture by the paſt, which certainly, though ſometimes fallible, is the beſt foundation on which unforeſeeing mortals can eſtabliſh their calculations. He was conſidering how to reply when the converſation was broken off by the ſudden appearance of Macdonnel himſelf, who walked into the room with all the eaſe and *non-chalance* that he could have done after a very long intimacy with the family. Rainsford, conſcious that he had not, by the ſlighteſt hint whatever, given him reaſon to ſuppoſe that his company would be acceptable at Eden, was perfectly aſtoniſhed to ſee him enter thus *ſans ceremonie*; but the Lieutenant, nothing daunted by the ſurpriſe viſible in the Colonel's countenance, addreſſed himſelf to Cecilia, hoping ſhe had recovered the fatigue of Tueſday evening, and ſaying, that he could not any longer defer availing himſelf of the obliging permiſſion which ſhe had given him to come and enquire after her.

This addreſs by no means leſſened Rainsford's ſurpriſe at his viſit, and he caſt an expreſſive, and penetrating look on Cecilia, ſufficiently ſignifying his diſſatisfaction at the permiſſion

miſſion ſhe had granted, while ſhe turned red, looked confuſed, and knew not how to anſwer Macdonnel, when the room door opened again, and to add to the general embarraſſment, in walked Morriſon.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The pow'r that miniſters to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what he foreſees,
Call'd Providence, or Chance, or fatal Sway,
Comes with reſiſtleſs force and makes its way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united pow'r,
One moment can retard th' appointed hour;
For ſure whate'er we mortals hate or love,
Or hope, or fear, depends on pow'rs above;
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foreſight neceſſitate the will.

DRYDEN.

ON the ſtrength of Cecilia's aſſurance to her old lover, that if he ſhould come to Eden, ſhe would not be viſible, he had ventured over, to pour forth all his chagrin into the ſympathiſing boſom of his friend; chagrin which had received a conſiderable addition

tion by the reception of Cecilia's letter, and by reflecting on the ridiculous figure he ſhould make in the eyes of the world in general, and particularly in thoſe of the governor, to have been made at his years the *complete* dupe of a *complete* coquette.

On arriving at Eden, he enquired if Colonel Rainsford was at home, and was anſwered in the affirmative; he next enquired if he was alone, and receiving a like affirmative, he deſired to ſee him. It ſo happened that he had unfortunately addreſſed himſelf to a different ſervant from him who had given admiſſion to Macdonnel, and who, to ſave himſelf the trouble of enquiring whether his maſter were alone, boldly affirmed him to be ſo: not at all a ſingular inſtance of the kind, we believe; but never could ſuch an aſſumption have been worſe timed; for thus the poor mortified Colonel was uſhered before the two people, whom, of all others, at that moment, he wiſhed to avoid. He involuntarily ſtarted, and was drawing back as Rainsford advanced to him, whom he addreſſed,—"I beg your pardon,

pardon, Sir, but I was informed you were alone."

Cecilia, ſufficiently confuſed before with Macdonnel's viſit, could not ſtand againſt this additional embarraſſment, but roſe up and went out of the room by a different door from that at which Morriſon ſtood, heſitating whether to advance or retreat, which Rainsford obſerving, ſaid, "I will be alone in a few minutes, my dear Colonel; but firſt I have a few words to ſay to this gentleman, to which I ſhall not be ſorry that you ſhould be witneſs." Then addreſſing Macdonnel, he ſaid,

"I was at a loſs, Sir, at the firſt ſight of you, to gueſs by what authority your viſit here could be made; but I ſuppoſe, by the few words which paſſed before Colonel Morriſon's arrival, I am to underſtand that it was in conſequence of an invitation from the lady who juſt now left the room, and was intended to her;—to me, I am ſure, it was totally unexpected, and equally undeſired. I am far from being inclined to affront any gentleman at any place, much more one who bears the commiſſion of the honourable company which I ſerve,

I ſerve, and in my own houſe; but on the preſent occaſion I cannot conſider myſelf as tranſgreſſing the bounds of good manners, when I tell you, that I hold this to be a very unwarrantable intruſion on your part, eſpecially as you muſt be well aſſured, that your behaviour, the only time I ever ſaw you, was not ſuch as could be ſatisfactory to me, and I therefore deſire, that as this is your firſt viſit here, ſo it may alſo be your laſt."

Macdonnel, though not very eaſily put to confuſion, yet knew not what to reply to plain truth, ſo plainly delivered, and retired, muttering ſomething about the affair not ending ſo, which gained not much attention from either Colonel. He went home, meditating whether or not he ought to demand immediate ſatisfaction of Rainsford: This he wanted not only for what he had ſaid, but for the mortification he had made his vanity endure, which had always led him to ſuppoſe that his perſonal beauty and eaſy addreſs would be his univerſal paſſport.

When he was departed, Morriſon laid all his grievances before Rainsford; but he could only

only liſten to them, it was impoſſible to afford them any remedy; and indeed the diſappointed lover himſelf ſaid, that he was reſolved not to think any more of Cecilia, but to purſue his route to England as ſpeedily as poſſible—a reſolution which he executed ſoon after, and thus terminated the affair on his part.

After this conference was concluded, Rainsford once more ſought Cecilia, and related what had paſſed, both with the poor mortified Staff-officer, and the young Lieutenant, adding, that he was aſtoniſhed at her imprudence in giving ſuch encouragement on ſo ſhort an acquaintance to ſuch a forward young man.

Cecilia denied that ſhe had aſked Macdonnel to come to Eden; "I only," ſhe ſaid, "ſpoke to him of your general hoſpitality, and particularly that your doors were always open to perſons of his profeſſion, preſuming you would yourſelf confirm this, by giving him, as uſual, a general invitation to your houſe; and, permit me to ſay, Colonel Rainsford, that I think it rather extraordinary behaviour from one gentleman to another, to

have

have turned Mr. Macdonnel away in a manner ſo inſulting."

"Indeed, Cecilia," he anſwered, "the inſult was rather yours than mine; for you could not ſuppoſe I ſhould give him ſuch an invitation, ſince you know full well, that on your account I have lately been under the diſagreeable neceſſity of obſerving a more diſtant behaviour to my brother officers than I wiſhed, or had been accuſtomed to; nor could you ſo little know me, as to ſuppoſe that I ſhould break through this reſerve in favour of a man who had ſo little claim to my attention as Macdonnel. But, indeed, Miſs Anneſley, you muſt excuſe me, if I ſuſpect that this was deſigned on your part, becauſe you ſaw he was a man whoſe behaviour I was not likely to approve, and you were therefore aſſured, that without ſome ſuch manœuvre, you would have little chance of making farther progreſs in his acquaintance."

"You are wonderfully minute in your inveſtigations, Sir, and are certainly at liberty to *conjecture* what you pleaſe, only you will pleaſe to recollect, that your *conjectures* cannot affect

affect the real truth of the caſe; nor do I think myſelf bound to make you ſo thoroughly acquainted with the inward receſſes of my heart, as to inform you whether they be true or falſe."

"Neither could any words give me more perfect information than your ſilence. Once more, therefore, I ſhall warn you on this ſubject; but, mark me, Cecilia, it is the laſt time: I cannot bear to live a life of perpetual altercation; and if you are obſtinately bent on your own ruin, I know it is vain for me to attempt its prevention. I ſhall, however, be conſcious, in whatever way this affair may terminate, that I have diſcharged my duty, when I have informed you of ſome particulars to which I deſire your patient attention: If after this you are ruined, it will be with your eyes open.—Know, then, that I have made enquiries about the character and proſpects of Macdonnel."

Here ſhe interrupted him: "I beg your pardon, Colonel Rainsford, but of whom, pray, may theſe enquiries have been made? for, it was but this morning that you ſeemed

to

to know no more than that ſuch a perſon as this tremendous young man exiſted."

"'Tis true; but, Colonel Morriſon"——

"I am right, then;—I did preſume that he muſt be your informer, but wiſhed to be certified of it, that I might know the exact meaſure of credit due to what you are about to relate."

"And do you ſuppoſe, Cecilia, that Colonel Morriſon would ſtoop to any thing ſo mean, as wilfully to relate a falſehood of any perſon, or on any ſubject whatever. And ſuppoſing he could ſo debaſe himſelf, what inducement could he now have to impart to me what he has done with regard to Macdonnel, except ardent wiſhes for your welfare."

"I do not ſuſpect Colonel Morriſon of relating a wilful falſehood; but a rival ſees with ſuch perverted eyes, that one can place very little dependence on any thing he may relate of the object of his jealouſy."

"And if *rivalſhip* might give this unfortunate bias to the mind, that is at preſent out of the queſtion; for whatever Colonel Morriſon's ſentiments may have been, Cecilia, not

not all the world combined could now induce him for one moment to think of an alliance with you. You loſt his eſteem the moment he became perfectly convinced that you did not know how to eſteem yourſelf, and he is not of a diſpoſition to love where he cannot eſteem any longer."

Cecilia was not a little mortified at what ſhe now heard; ſhe by no means liked the idea of having loſt her power over any one who had once been her admirer, however ſhe might chooſe to reject him as a huſband.—"Well," ſhe ſaid, "all this is foreign to the purpoſe—pray conclude what you were about to ſay, Colonel Rainsford; let us hear the dreadful character which Morriſon is ſo obligingly induſtrious to circulate of this young man, in order to ſet all the world againſt him on his firſt arrival in a ſtrange country."

Had not Colonel Rainsford poſſeſſed that uncommon degree of ſelf-command which has elſewhere been noticed, he muſt have been provoked at the folly of Cecilia's replies; but determined as he was at all events to keep his temper,

temper, he purſued the ſubject with the utmoſt calmneſs and perſeverance.

"You are miſtaken, Cecilia; Colonel Morriſon is incapable of the meanneſs you would aſcribe to him. He has not given this young man a *dreadful* character, nor circulated with induſtry the traits in his diſfavour, which he imparted in confidence to me, in order that you might not be deceived by him in any way. He is of a good family in Ireland; but his commiſſion is his ſole property, and like many other of his countrymen, he truſts to his perſon and addreſs for making his fortune by marriage. Before he left England, he was engaged to a lady at Bath, who paſſed for a rich heireſs, and whoſe ſhowy appearance ſeemed to confirm that idea; but before he was married, diſcovering that her whole fortune conſiſted in her external ſhew, he quitted Bath without ſo much as bidding the lady adieu. He then paid his addreſſes to the only child of a banker in London, whoſe property was ſuppoſed to be very large; but he ſoon after broke, and the Lieutenant again took a French leave of his miſtreſs. Yet, farther,

Cecilia,

Cecilia; the other night, when he was dancing with you, another Lieutenant of the ſame regiment was overheard enquiring of him who you were, when he anſwered, "Juſt ſuch an one as I want!—a deviliſh large fortune I aſſure you; the heireſs of a very rich officer, who has a beautiful place about five miles off; —damn it, 'tis juſt the thing, isn't it?"—On which the other, ſhaking him by the hand, ſaid, "By God you're a damned lucky fellow, Pat; but take care that ſhe does not turn out a Sanders or a Wilmot; (the names, it ſeems, of the two above-mentioned ladies.") "No, by God," anſwered Macdonnel; "I think I am more ſure of my mark now: But, however, you know I always take care not to go on without ſecuring a retreat; and if I find that things are not likely to turn out according to my expectation—March is the word with me, damme;"—and then they both laughed immoderately, and parted, ſhaking hands, one ſaying to the other,—"Well, Pat, I wiſh you ſucceſs with all my heart—I do by God!"

"Thus you ſee, my dear Cecilia, what Macdonnel's ideas are with regard to you, and the probable change that will take place in his ſentiments when he finds that you are not the heireſs of my fortune. As to the reſt, he is a kind of negative character; not a poſitive drunkard, though he drinks freely; hot, though not very ill-tempered; not a gameſter nor a ſpendthrift beyond his abilities, but fond of play on tolerably ſecure grounds; and now you know exactly what ſort of man he is, your own feelings muſt decide whether you can give him farther encouragement. I ſhall certainly not render myſelf acceſſary to any connection you may form with him, by permitting him to come to my houſe; neither ſhall I take any particular precautions to keep you out of his way; for I know by experience, that ſuch precautions are uſeleſs. In giving you this warning I have diſcharged my duty; it remains for you to decide whether or not it ſhall influence your conduct."

He pauſed, expecting ſome reply, but ſhe remained ſilent, with her eyes caſt down, half vexed, half angry; ſome parts of the relation

which

which Rainsford had given her were certainly not a little wounding to her vanity, in the aſſurance that ſhe herſelf was not alone the object of Macdonnel's admiration, and this mortified her more ſenſibly than almoſt any thing ſhe could have heard. As ſhe did not ſeem diſpoſed, however, to carry the converſation farther, Rainsford, after a few minutes ſilence, roſe up, and left her to ponder the matter by herſelf.

And ponder on it ſhe did for a long time, half reſolving, that the Lieutenant who could be ſo inſenſible as to think about her fortune when he beheld her perſon, ſhould receive his juſt puniſhment, by not being permitted to behold that perſon any more. But the power deſcribed in the motto to this chapter, more mighty than her reſentment, urged her on, and through its agency, after a while, that reſentment began to be ſoftened, and ſhe found a thouſand excuſes for ſentiments which at firſt appeared abſolutely unpardonable, till at length ſhe perſuaded herſelf that there was more malice than truth in what Rainsford had heard, and that in fact her Iriſhman was ſtill

the ſame charming creature as her fancy had depicted him at the commencement of their acquaintance.

He too, led on by the ſame power, though he ſoon found his miſtake as to Cecilia's fortune, did not drop his purſuit: He certainly was not a little ſmitten with her, and wiſhed for the poſſeſſion of ſuch charms; yet this alone might perhaps not have rivetted his chains too faſt to be broken, had it not been ſupported by another conſideration, viz. that Rainsford's ſituation gave him great influence, which might be employed in raiſing him in his profeſſion, ſhould he become the huſband of his Ward; and thus the match might be made to anſwer as well as if ſhe were actually a large fortune.

With theſe diſpoſitions they were thrown by circumſtances into a ſituation particularly favourable for bringing the affair to a ſpeedy concluſion. The fête given by the Chief-Juſtice, was followed by the like train of feſtivity, to compliment them in return, as had before followed Colonel Rainsford's, and thus they were perpetually meeting, till before the round

round was well run out, Macdonnel had made his offer in form; in form it had been accepted by the lady, and her acceptance announced in form to Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford. They once more urged to her the imprudence of ſuch a ſtep, and the probable conſequences attending it; but inſenſible alike to remonſtrance and argument, ſhe regarded not what they ſaid, and in a ſhort time the indiſſoluble knot was tied.

But however diſtreſſed at this event, Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, when the evil was paſt remedy, did not follow the example of thoſe outrageouſly virtuous perſons, who, becauſe they cannot avert what they deem a misfortune, endeavour, by all means in their power, to increaſe its magnitude, inſtead of ſeeking to adminiſter ſuch palliatives as the caſe may admit; and though before Cecilia's marriage they would not be ſo far acceſſary to it as to aſk Macdonnel to their houſe; yet, when the deed was done, nor could be recalled, they ſought only how to make the beſt of it, and not only did not withdraw their friendſhip from their ward, but even admitted

her husband on terms of sociability, which nothing but their regard for her could have induced.

It now became necessary that this unfortunate affair should be communicated to Mr. Annesley, which Rainsford did by the next ship that sailed for England. He had in a former letter announced the intended marriage with Morrison, expressing the highest satisfaction in it, as a connection extremely eligible, both with regard to the man and the fortune; and he felt it therefore a doubly-painful task not merely to put an end to the satisfaction the father must have found in such a prospect, but also to inform him that his daughter had disposed of herself in the most imprudent manner possible.

All this Colonel Rainsford fairly represented, neither seeking "*to extenuate*" any thing, nor to "*set down aught in malice*," and then proceeded:—"I trust, my dear Sir, you will believe that we have omitted no proper means to prevent this unfortunate connection from taking place. All that reasoning and exhortation could do, has been done, and to go farther,

farther, I was well aſſured, was equally inconſiſtent with your own principles as with mine. Had we taken ſtronger meaſures either for promoting the one match or preventing the other, and Miſs Anneſley had afterwards been unhappy, we muſt have reproached ourſelves eternally as the cauſe of it. Our principal ſubject of regret at preſent is, that we too unguardedly undertook the arduous taſk of introducing the daughter of a friend into life, and particularly into ſuch a life as is led in this country. I muſt add, however, that it is by no means our intention to withdraw from Mrs. Macdonnel the friendſhip we have ſhewn to Miſs Anneſley; ſhe will always be received by us on the ſame terms ſhe has been hitherto; nor can we have greater pleaſure than in ſeeing her reſpectable and happy in her new ſituation. Let us hope that this may be the caſe, and that the affair may turn out better than at preſent we have reaſon to expect.—Thoſe who have had much experience in the world, have often ſeen the moſt brilliant mornings of life ſoon overclouded, and ſucceeded by a noon and evening of ſtorms and

tempeſts, while a cloudy and lowering dawn has been followed by a ſplendid meridian, and an evening of the pureſt mildneſs and ſerenity.

That the clouds which now hover round the head of Cecilia, may ſoon be diſperſed, and a blaze of ſunſhine burſt on her; and that ſhe, with her huſband, may enjoy every happineſs this world can afford, will always be the ardent wiſh of,

Dear Sir,

Your's faithfully,

EDWARD RAINSFORD.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XIX.

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit!

SHAKSPEARE.

IN order that we might not break into the narrative of the above tranſaction, we have taken a long leave of Mrs. Meadows, to whom we muſt now return.

She ſtayed ſome time at Eden, during which ſhe never heard any more of Dawkins, and began to be convinced that the threat he had uttered was merely to frighten her; and learning from Mr. Benington that he had certainly left Calcutta, ſhe ventured to return to her own houſe.

But ſhe had not been there many days, before, to her utter aſtoniſhment, ſhe beheld her tormentor once more enter her room—"Good God!" ſhe ſtarted and exclaimed, "how is this? How could you, Sir, gain admittance? what intolerable careleſſneſs in my ſervants to pay ſo little attention to my ſtrict orders;" and ſhe put her hand to the bell to ring and order him to be turned out, when in a ſolemn and pathetic tone he ſaid,

"Oh, ſtay your hand but for a moment, Mrs. Meadows! I have buſineſs of the laſt importance to communicate, if you will but deign to liſten to me; it is in that perſuaſion that your ſervants admitted me; but I go this inſtant if you command me hence, and will convey my errand to you by other means."

She looked at him, he wore a countenance of ſolemn ſorrow, and tears ſeemed ſtarting into his eyes;—half melted ſhe replied, "After what paſſed at our laſt interview, I know not, Mr. Dawkins, whether I ought to liſten to you for one moment."

"It is in conſequence of that behaviour that you now behold me here, Madam, a penitent,

nitent, a ſincere, an almoſt heart-broken penitent; oh, Mrs. Meadows! believe me, I look back with the deepeſt contrition, with the moſt perfect abhorrence, on what paſſed at that time, and can aſſure you that phrenzy only prompted the expreſſions I then uttered; I was wild, I was frantic with deſpair; your coldneſs and diſdain operating on a heart which adored you, produced the effect which I have never ſince ceaſed to deplore."

He roſe up, he walked about the room in the moſt violent agitation, then ſat down again, and, fixing his eyes on Amelia, ſaid, "Mrs. Meadows can you forgive me?"

She knew not what to think of all this; was it poſſible that he could be acting a part, ſhe aſked herſelf ſeveral times?—ſurely ſuch emotions never could be feigned? yet what cannot an experienced diſſembler atchieve? She was unwilling to carry ſuſpicion too far, yet could ſcarcely prevail on herſelf to liſten to him. He, looking earneſtly at her, proceeded,

"You will not truſt me, Mrs. Meadows? Oh hard fate! oh curſed fortune! Can you

then doubt the truth of theſe emotions?—Speak they not too plainly to be feigned? Can they be aught but the effect of raging diſappointed love? Would to God you could ſee my heart, you would behold it torn with remorſe, ready to burſt with agony! But no more of this! I will be calm; I came reſolved not to talk to you of my paſſion, But I have tranſgreſſed the laws I had preſcribed myſelf—yet it is over—The mortified lover cannot in a moment be compoſed in the preſence of the beloved object; but now liſten to me, I conjure you; I have matters of the deepeſt importance to impart.—Weymar's bond is a forgery; of this I have indiſputable proof—your huſband——"

"Is ſtill alive!" exclaimed Amelia, "Tell me ſo, and I will call down the bleſſings of heaven eternally on your head!"

"Would to God I could tell you ſo!—would to God I could by any means gain a bleſſing from that tongue! but he is dead indeed, though his death did not happen as you have been taught to ſuppoſe.—Liſten, and I will

will relate a wonderful train of diſcoveries which I have made."

"Oh God!" cried Amelia, "where is all this to end? how I am kept in continual tortures!—But ſay on, Sir!"

"You already know, Madam, how Mr. Meadows, accompanied by Mr. Benington and his ſervant Ooſhawn, went to Chinſura to ſeek for a derviſe, whom the latter had repreſented as capable of curing the malady under which your unfortunate huſband appeared to be ſinking; and you know, too, that after a ſhort time, Mr. Benington was obliged to leave him under the care of Ooſhawn and the derviſe. I happened to be at Chinſura at that time, and would gladly have ſhewn my friendſhip to Mr. Meadows by a thouſand little acts of kindneſs, all of which however he refuſed, I am afraid from conſidering me in the light of a rival. In a ſhort time he ſhewed viſible ſigns of amendment; a wound in his breaſt, which, though it was of very long ſtanding, had never thoroughly healed, by the derviſe's applications began to wear a leſs threatening aſpect, and every thing gave promiſe that the holy

holy man had not undertaken more than he was able to perform. As, however, much time was requiſite for performing a complete cure, the derviſe perſuaded his patient to accompany him to his habitation, which was ſome way up the Ganges, and they accordingly went thither together. All theſe particulars I had from Ooſhawn, who left Chinſura in a day or two after Mr. Meadows's departure; nor do I know what became of him.

"I did not remain long after this at Chinſura, as I had buſineſs up the country; nor knew I any thing more of Mr. Meadows's fate, till returning ſome months after to Calcutta, I heard the ſtory which Weymar related, and to which I gave credit, as I knew no reaſon for diſbelieving it, but accident lately let me into the real truth of the affair.

"Near four months after Mr. Meadows's departure with the derviſe, Weymar being in a budgerow on the river, as they were ſtopping for the night, ſaw this very derviſe, whom he had known at Chinſura, come towards them in a fiſherman's bark, attended only by the fiſherman who rowed it. Weymar hailed the

boat,

boat, and accoſted the derviſe, who recollecting him, told him with the utmoſt agony, that the young man whom he had taken with him to his habitation, to cure of his malady, had been murdered by ſome villains, two days before in his abſence, and he was going down to Calcutta to tell his friends of his fate.

"Weymar was ſtruck with this relation, and thought he might turn it to his advantage. He therefore told the derviſe, that he might ſpare himſelf the reſt of his voyage, for, as he knew Mr. Meadows's friends, he would inform them of the cataſtrophe, and the derviſe, with gratitude, accepted his offer. The uſe then that he made of this information was, to forge the bond and ſtory, which he produced on Mr. Benington's return to Calcutta.

"Such, Madam," continued Dawkins," are the diſcoveries I have made; and when the caſe of the bond comes to a hearing, I can furniſh you with evidence to ſupport the truth of all that I have related. I muſt only aſk of you to place ſo much reliance on my faith, as not to impart theſe circumſtances to any one till the cauſe is tried, for the leaſt mention

mention of them might overturn the whole, and Weymar might be able to counter-act the force of the teſtimonies I have to bring againſt him."

Amelia was ſo aſtoniſhed that ſhe knew not what to reply to Dawkins. The language he had now held, was ſo very different from what he had uſed at his laſt viſit, that ſhe was utterly at a loſs how to reconcile them together. He ſaw her embarraſſment and went on:—

"You heſitate, Mrs. Meadows—you know not how to believe me—but that is perfectly natural: After the indecent language I held the laſt time I was here, I had no reaſon to expect that what I ſhould now ſay would meet with a favourable reception. But when I urged that phrenzy prompted the expreſſions I then uſed, I told you the truth; I was wild with love and deſpair, and hoped, as I could not ſoothe, to frighten you into yielding to my wiſhes. My paſſion has, however, ſince undergone a ſevere diſcipline,—ſhame and penitence have purſued me; nor ſhould I have dared to approach you again, had I not been

urged

urged to it by ſuch powerful motives. I reſt my hopes of your giving me credit for ſincerity in what I now allege, on the event of your cauſe; if it ſhall then appear that I have not engaged for more than I can perform, I may ſurely hope for pardon on the ſubject on which you are now ſo juſtly offended. Yet, believe me, it is not my intention to make this matter a pretence for claiming any reward; I wiſh to ſerve you diſintereſtedly—I have totally relinquiſhed the aſpiring hopes I once indulged; and though I feel that I can never ceaſe to adore you, yet, believe me, not a hint that way ſhall ever paſs my lips, if I may but be permitted the gratification of occaſionally enjoying your company."

In all that Dawkins now ſaid, reigned ſuch an appearance of openneſs and ſincerity, that Mrs. Meadows knew not how to refuſe him her belief and conſequent forgiveneſs. Whatever had paſſed at his former viſit was plauſibly accounted for; and ſhe ſaid, "I own, Sir, that your ſtory wears a ſemblance of truth, which almoſt inclines me to believe it; yet on one point I muſt ſtill aſk ſatisfaction: Did

Did you know of the circumſtances you have now related, at your laſt viſit, when you hinted at ſome fraud having been practiſed with regard to Weymar's bond?"

"I did, Madam; and wiſhed then to make my own uſe of the knowledge I had gained, in forwarding my ſuit with you;—but, thank heaven, that is at an end; my eyes are opened to the folly and wickedneſs of my conduct; nor do I wiſh for any thing now but to reſtore you to your rights, and to detect the fraud which has been practiſed."

"Well, Mr. Dawkins, if you are ſincere, you will not object to what I am going to requeſt:—You know the character of Mr. Benington—you know that he is a man of the ſtricteſt honour and integrity, and that he is my intimate friend. Will you conſent that I impart to him, under a promiſe of ſecrecy, all that you have told me? He has been my kind adviſer in all my difficulties, and I wiſh to conſult him on the ſubject."

"Would to God, Madam, that you had not aſked this of me;—yet, why do I ſay ſo?—I know that Mr. Benington may be truſted;

and

and what would I not do, in reaſon, to convince you of my ſincerity. Say to him then, whatever you pleaſe, Madam, you have my free conſent to do ſo; only remember, that ſecrecy is of the utmoſt importance to the cauſe; for if a word ſhould tranſpire to Weymar, previouſly to the trial, all is loſt. But I intrude on your indulgence, Madam; yet your company is ſo dear to me, that I know not how to quit it. Will you allow me to come again, and hear what Mr. Benington thinks of the buſineſs?—Surely, you will not deny this ſmall requeſt."

Though Mrs. Meadows had much rather this permiſſion had not been aſked, yet, as ſhe was then circumſtanced, ſhe did not know how to refuſe it, and ſhe therefore gave him leave to renew his viſit, which obtained, he roſe up and retired.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XX.

Rude was Bizardo's cell; the beetling rock
Frown'd o'er its ivied entrance; the hewn ſtone
Form'd his rough ſeat; and on a bed of leaves
The aged hermit took his nightly reſt.
A pure ſtream welling from the moſſy rock
Crept murmuring thro' the wood, and many a flow'r
Drank on its ſide the genial ſap of life.

SOUTHEY.

DAWKINS was no ſooner gone, than Mrs. Meadows ſent for Mr. Benington, to whom ſhe related all that had paſſed, when both agreed that the whole affair was one of the moſt extraordinary and myſterious they had ever heard; and Amelia could not help ſuggeſting, that ſhe thought there was ſome reaſon to flatter themſelves with a hope that her huſband

huſband might be yet alive. "For if you obſerve," ſhe ſaid, "here are three different ſtories as to the time and manner of his death, *two* of them *muſt* be falſe, why *may* they not *all* be ſo?"

"Ah, do not think of that, my dear madam," ſaid Benington, "conſider, that though they differ as to the manner of his death, they all agree as to the fact. But why not go to the fountain head for intelligence? I will ſeek the Derviſe and know the ſtory from his own mouth."

"And will you do this? and will you let me go with you?"

"Oh, certainly; if it will give you any ſatisfaction to go, it will be a very great one to me to be your companion."

"Kind, good man! but how ſhall we find him?"

"I know where his habitation is perfectly well; it is on the banks of the Ganges, nearly oppoſite to Rajemahel, or rather on the oppoſite ſhore between that place and Oodooanullah."

"And what ſhall we do with regard to Dawkins?

Dawkins? ſhall we communicate our intention to him?"

"Undoubtedly; it will be a teſt of his ſincerity, whether or not he ſhall attempt to oppoſe our plan."

All things were ſoon agreed on, and the next day but one fixed for their departure. The intervening day Mrs. Meadows wrote to her friends the Rainsfords, to communicate her intention and ſhe alſo ſaw Dawkins, and imparted it to him, when he, far from attempting to ſtart any objection, expreſſed himſelf as rejoiced that ſhe was going herſelf to ſeek full ſatisfaction on the affair.

On the morning appointed, Mr. Benington, with Mrs. Meadows and Indamora, for ſhe could not leave her behind, embarked on the Hoogly, and by the uſual days' journeys, arrived at the derviſe's habitation, on the banks of the Ganges. It was one of the moſt romantic and enchanting ſpots of which the imagination could form an idea. They landed beneath a vaſt rock which "*beetled o'er its baſe*" upon the waters, and was crowned with trees and ſhrubs then in the moſt beautiful

tiful and luxuriant foliage; and paſſing under a natural arch-way in the rock, through which ran a ſmall ſtream over a pebbly bottom, whoſe waters were clear as cryſtal, and freſh as the pure fountain of Rocnabad, they entered a ſmall valley, or rather chaſm among the rocks, on the ſide of one of which, directly facing the arch-way, was erected the Derviſe's hut.

It was compoſed of reeds and moſſes, and ſtood beneath the circling ſhade of a very large Banyan tree, which defended it entirely from the piercing rays the ſun darts on that part of the globe. On one ſide of this hut, the holy man had encloſed a ſmall ſpace ſacred to the cultivation of the herb by means of which his miraculous cures were performed; and on the other he had planted a little garden, which furniſhed him with roots for his food, while a cryſtal ſtream which fell from the ſide of the rock down a channel cloſe by his hut, ſupplied him with a pleaſant and wholeſome beverage. The whole of the receſs was beautifully interſperſed with trees and ſhrubs, under whoſe ſhade the lonely inhabitant of this delicious

licious retreat, would often repoſe in pious meditation.

But the moſt ſtriking feature of the whole ſcene, was the view from the derviſe's hut, thro' the arch-way in the rock, over the waters of the Ganges, which rolled at its foot, and on which veſſels were conſtanly paſſing and repaſſing, and the romantic ſcenery on the oppoſite ſhore, conſiſting of rocks and hanging woods, among which aroſe the famous ruins of Rajemahel. Theſe different objects, thus viewed in perſpective, formed the moſt enchanting and pictureſque aſſemblage of noble and beautiful images that it was poſſible for the mind to conceive.

Amelia, on entering the ſpot, was too much loſt amidſt the ſublimity of the ſcene, and the idea that there was the tomb of her departed huſband, to be able to utter a ſyllable of admiration, but ſhe ſat down on the turf and burſt into tears. The derviſe, who had obſerved them enter, approached and accoſted her, "Wherefore art thou ſad, oh daughter of affliction?"—Then looking on Benington, whom he immediately recollected, "And thou,"

thou," ſaid he, "oh friend of him on whom the light of heaven ſhall beam no more, wherefore art thou come hither? Would'ſt thou again ſeek the aſſiſtance of my healing art?—Brahma proſper me to ſerve thee, if ſuch be thy errand"

"No, father," replied the merchant, "it is for other purpoſes that we have now ſought your peaceful abode. You remember on what occaſion you ſaw me before?"

"Full well, and my ſoul is ſad at the recollection. Thou it was who didſt recommend to my protection that unfortunate young Chriſtian—Brahma guard his ſoul!—whoſe doom the dark hand of fate ſealed up, while yet he remained among theſe ſolitary ſhades."

"It is true,—and in this afflicted woman you behold the widow of that child of misfortune."

"Nor do I wonder then that ſhe is ſad, for her's was no common loſs.—Oh, ſuch a man!—the dews of the morning never ſhed around their benignant influence for the ſervice of a kinder, gentler heart; ſoft affection beamed in his eye, perſuaſion hung on his

lips, and the gentle flame of brotherly love warmed his heart! Oh, that the light of our glorious faith might but have pierced through the darkneſs in which his mind was enveloped, that alone was wanting to render him the perfection of human-nature! But be comforted, my daughter, — Brahma ſtill may have mercy on him even in the grave, and purify his ſoul till it be fit in time to hold a place in the Paradiſe of the bleſſed. But, perhaps, thou doſt afflict thyſelf that thou couldeſt not die with him! — Oh, how much happier are the daughters of our faith, who enjoy the glorious privilege of ſacrificing themſelves with thoſe they love!"

"Is he then certainly dead?" ſaid Benington. "We had conceived ſome hopes that the reports ſpread of his death might not be true."

"Ah they are but too true! — I went forth at the dawn of the morning, to adminiſter to one who wanted my aid, — I returned at noon and he was no more! — They murdered him even under the ſhade of yon ſacred tree, (pointing to a banyan at a little diſtance). — I have

have prayed inceſſantly to Brahma to make known to me the villainous perpetrators of ſo accurſed a deed, but no viſion has yet been vouchſafed me by which to diſcover them. I was myſelf accuſed of the murder, but our great God knows that I am as innocent of it as the embryo which has never ſeen the light!"

"And where is the body interred?" aſked Amelia, "that I may weep over his aſhes, and ſtrew flowers around the ſpot."

"Pious relict of the beſt of men, thy intentions are good, but no earth encloſes his cold remains, they reſt in yon ſacred waters; ſo far the villains did him juſtice."

"Was it ſo then that he met his death?—Was he drowned in this mighty river?"

"No, not ſo, my daughter.—But the ſcorching rays of the ſun here reſt on thy head;—retire then under the ſhade of my humble roof, where thou wilt be ſheltered. Ye are in want of refreſhment too,—I have roots and fruit which I will ſet before ye, and ye ſhall eat—and while ye regale yourſelves, I will impart the mournful tale."

They accepted the hoſpitable invitation of

the recluſe, and ſeating themſelves under the ſhade of the banyan which encircled his habitation, he brought out his little ſtores and ſet before them, praying for a bleſſing on them. Then taking Indamora by the hand, "and this is thy child?" he ſaid.

"She is the child of my huſband indeed, —but, alas not mine! only bequeathed by him to my care."

"And for his ſake thou loveſt her now, and wilt love her for ever."

"Oh ſhe is dear to me indeed!—But, come, good father, tell me all that you know relative to his deplorable fate."

"As the dark vapours of night fly before the enlivening beams of the ſun, ſo at the ſmiles of Brahma fled diſeaſe from his enfeebled frame; and as the faded flower revives at the breath of the cooling zephyr, ſo expanded again the roſes of health on his pale and emaciated cheeks. My ſoul rejoiced in beholding this amendment, my heart overflowed with gratitude to the Power who had thus proſpered mine endeavours. It was about the diſtance of two coſs from hence that

I went

I went in the hope of doing farther honour to Brahma, by performing a like cure equally ſurpaſſing the powers of humanity. Oh how was I bowed to the earth with affliction, when at my return I found that my ſon, my beloved ſon, was miſſing, while his garment, which lay at the foot of the ſacred tree, ſpotted over with the precious drops of his blood, and the knife which had been buried up to the hilt in his gentle heart, bore a dreadful teſtimony to the horrid ſacrifice which had been offered to the inſatiable dæmon of darkneſs!"

He pauſed, overpowered with the affecting recollection—he fell on his face to the ground, then raiſing up his hands and eyes, preferred a ſilent prayer to his god, and proceeded.

"I traced the drops of blood to the water-ſide, and there ſat down to bewail the cruel fate of my child, and to pray for pardon of Brahma, if peradventure he had viſited me with this judgment, for taking into my dwelling one who called no ton his holy name; when, at length, as evening drew on, a fiſherman made towards me, and enquired into the cauſe of my ſorrow. I told him the mournful tale, and

entreated him to take me down the river to Calcutta, that I might impart the ſame to the friends of the deceaſed; to which he conſented, and told me, that as he was fiſhing in the morning at a little diſtance, he ſaw three perſons come from under yon arch-way, and throwing ſomething heavy into the water as far as they could, make off directly; but he was not ſufficiently near to ſee their faces, neither could he tell which way they went, as the rock ſoon concealed them from his ſight. We ſailed down the ſtream all the next day, at the cloſe of which we met with a budgerow, in which was a man whom I had ſeen at Chinſura, to whom I told my ſtory, and who promiſed to make it known to thee, oh my ſon," (addreſſing Benington), "on which I returned back to my own dwelling; but I call Brahma to witneſs that I have never ceaſed to mourn my loſs."

"You loved your gueſt then?" ſaid the merchant.

"Loved him!—Oh God!—I never ſhall forget him; would that I could have kept him with me for ever!"

"And

"And do you know, good father, what became of the man who firſt aſked your aſſiſtance for the unfortunate deceaſed?"

"Ooſhawn, thy ſervant, doſt thou mean?"

"I do."

"He diſappeared from Chinſura before we left that town; we thought that he had returned to Calcutta."

"He certainly did not; nor have I ever heard of him ſince."

"He is gone, then, peradventure, among his own caſte—he never was happy with the Chriſtians.—But, come, my children, I will ſhew you the garment of your friend; I have kept it juſt as it was left here, ſprinkled with the precious drops."

He went into his cell, and returned with it immediately in his hand:—It was a ſort of gown of thin taffeta, ſuited to the heat of the climate, and in the inſide were the initials of the deceaſed's name, C. B. M.

Amelia ſhuddered at the ſight; her murdered huſband ſeemed now placed before her view; every wound which her heart had ſuffered on his account, was opened a-freſh, and

ſympa-

ſympathetic drops to thoſe which ſhe beheld, ſeemed to iſſue from them. Yet while horror thus poſſeſſed her, a more powerful impulſe, which cannot be accounted for, and could only be felt, impelled her to wiſh for the poſſeſſion of ſo hallowed a relick, and ſhe intimated her deſire to the derviſe.

What had once belonged to his beloved gueſt, was ſo dear to the old man's heart, that he ſcarcely knew how to part with it; yet the claim of a wife was not to be reſiſted, and he conſented to reſign it to her, ſaying, as he put it into her hands, "I could not have ſpared it to another."

Thus was Mrs. Meadows at length ſatisfied as to the fate of her huſband, a fate which appeared no leſs ſingular than tragical; he was ſnatched from one of the many ſnares which death ſpreads around for his prey, only to be entangled the next moment in another ſtill more fatal; and when the faded bloſſoms of health began to revive again on his cheeks, it was only, alas! that they might be cropped for ever!

So the fierce flame of a meridian ſun,
Gilds the poor inſect which it dooms to periſh. 312

Mrs. Robinson.

And now ſuſpicions aroſe both in her mind and in that of Mr. Benington, that Weymar himſelf might be the perpetrator of the murder: and perhaps, by previous threats, had induced Charles to ſign the bond he wanted. Many circumſtances indeed appeared ſtrongly to ſupport this opinion; he certainly had been lurking about in thoſe parts, by the derviſe's having met with him on the river; and his propoſing to carry the ſtory himſelf to Calcutta, bore the ſemblance of his not wiſhing to truſt it out of his own hands, that he might mould it into ſuch a form as ſhould ſuit his purpoſe. Moreover, in this way, ſome motive appeared to ſtimulate ſo villainous a deed; and ſuppoſing it to have been perpetrated by any other perſon, no poſſible motive could be imagined.

On the whole, therefore, they both reſted in the belief that the myſtery was now unravelled, while the confirmation of Dawkins's ſtory, by that which they had heard from the derviſe, reſtored the divine to a better place in their opinions, than he had enjoyed for ſome time before, and Amelia gave him credit for having

having accounted fairly to her for the threats which he had once thrown out, and began rather more to pity, than abhor, a paſſion ſo violent as to tranſport him into ſuch exceſſes.

But anxious now to gain, if poſſible, ſome farther evidence againſt Weymar, they agreed to remain for ſome time at the derviſe's cell, in order to make all poſſible enquiries on the ſubject, and had good hopes, that as he muſt have had accomplices, (for the fiſhermen had ſeen three men come out of the arch-way) they might diſcover them, and ſo arrive at ſufficient proof to criminate the principal.

But after three weeks ſtay, and the moſt minute inveſtigation, no proof was to be obtained. By ſome perſons it was ſtill affirmed, that the derviſe alone could be the murderer, while others were as poſitive, that ſanctity ſuch as his, could not be aſſumed, but was the genuine effuſion of his heart, and conſequently he was incapable of ſuch villainy: So thought his two gueſts, nor paid a moment's attention to thoſe who ſought to vilify him.

The calm and tranquil life which Amelia led here, the beauty of the ſpot itſelf, and the grandeur

grandeur and ſublimity of the ſcenery in the country around, many parts of which ſhe viſited, and more than all, the intereſting ſtories, which

> Oft as the ſtar of evening in the Weſt,
> Sat like a Phœnix on her burning neſt.
>
> MERRY.

the derviſe would relate of her loved loſt Charles, as they ſat together under the ſhade of the Banyan, united to faſcinate her mind to ſuch a degree, that ſhe thought ſhe could gladly have remained there for ever, with no other companion but the holy man.

But ſhe had a tie to ſociety which could not be broken through.—Herſelf ſhe might ſeclude; but Indamora muſt neither be ſecluded with her, nor thrown unprotected on the world; and at length, when convinced that no farther intelligence was likely to be gained, by prolonging her ſtay, ſhe reſolved to tear herſelf from the ſpot; and taking an affectionate leave of her hoſt, returned with her two companions to the tumultuous ſcenes of Calcutta.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

ERRATA.

Page 183, line 8, for *eight*, read *ten*.
206, line 5, for *Juſtices's*, read *Juſtice's*.
207, line 10, the ſame fault.

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